



15 STEPS TO PERSONAL FREEDOM



1. KADESH — RECITING KIDDUSH SEPARATE

We begin the Seder with Kadesh, making a blessing over wine. Kadesh means to sanctify—we sanctify G-d's name and the wine by blessing it. Kadesh also means “to separate,” referring to the separation between good and bad, holy and mundane.

2. U'RCHATZ — WASHING THE HANDS CLEANSE

We wash hands before dipping a vegetable (Karpas) in saltwater. Every new process requires a cleansing. Following the separation between the mundane and the sacred, we submerge our hands in water, cleansing our “tools” in preparation for the following 13 steps.

3. KARPAS — EATING A VEGETABLE DIPPED IN SALT WATER GET UNSTUCK

The vegetable (grown in the ground) represents the body; salt water represents salty tears shed in emotional or painful times. Salt is a cleanser; tears are an expression of the soul. We cleanse our bodies with our soul's tears, freeing ourselves from the illusion that the material world is the only reality.

4. YACHATZ — BREAKING THE MIDDLE MATZAH OPEN

Matzah, which consists of the bare minimum of flour and water without any inflating air, represents *bittul*, the ability to transcend our own viewpoint and allow a higher truth. Breaking the matzah is breaking the self.

5. MAGGID — RECITING THE HAGADDAH PARAMETERIZE

The Hagaddah is the story of our lives, of all harsh and oppressive forces in our personal “Mitzrayims”, and our liberation from them. If we convince ourselves that our constraints are “normal” and “healthy” we cannot free ourselves. So, we tell the story. Our story. By defining the parameters of our own internal “exile”, we begin the process of redemption.

6. RACHTZAH — WASHING THE HANDS PREPARE

Once we are elevated to a higher level of holiness through the first five steps, we wash our hands again, preparing ourselves for the next stage of spiritual growth. We take our newly formed psychological mindset of freedom and begin to actualize it in our material lives.



7. MOTZI — RECITING THE BLESSING HAMOTZI

INTEGRATE

We begin the process of integrating the spiritual and the material with Motzi: the first blessing on the matzah. Here matzah focuses on the positive side of materialism; on its great potential which is released when we reveal the Divine spark within it.

8. MATZAH — RECITING THE BLESSING ON THE MATZAH AND EATING IT FAITH

By eating matzah—the food of *bitul*—we assume its qualities. As the Rebbe MaHaRash writes, eating matzah is like “eating G-dliness”. On the first night of Passover matzah is called the “bread of faith”. On the second night it is called “bread of healing”.

9. MAROR — EATING THE BITTER HERBS PAIN OF GROWTH

The bitter maror teaches us about the process of growth—that setbacks and pain in life strengthen us. The maror is dipped into sweet charoses to demonstrate that even when we need to feel bitterness, its purpose and objective is for us to reach a greater freedom.

10. KORECH — EATING A SANDWICH OF MATZAH AND MAROR BITTER—SWEET

We combine the matzah's earthiness and *bittul* and the maror's bitterness (dipped in sweet charoses). There is a time for the sweet and a time for the bitter, but then we must learn to join them both into one seamless experience called life—the mission for which we are sent here by G-d. And then we have freedom.

11. SHULCHAN ORUCH — EATING THE FESTIVE MEAL DO IT!

After the first 10 steps (corresponding to the ten sefirot) of training to integrate spiritual freedom into our material lives, we are now ready for the first real test: eating an entire meal in an entirely new way, one permeated with a sense of Higher presence and G-dliness.

12. TZOFON — EATING THE AFIKOMAN REVEAL

Tzofon means “hidden”. After we have eaten a complete meal as free people, a material meal eaten in a spiritual and refined way, we now have the power to reveal that which is hidden and unconscious—tzofon—within ourselves and those around us.

13. BEIRACH — RECITING GRACE DRAW DOWN

Beirach gives us the power to ensure that the meal—which is symbolic of all our material experiences—will yield the spiritual energy that lies within its Divine sparks. Beirach (to bless) means “to draw down”—to draw down spirituality and G-dliness into this physical world.

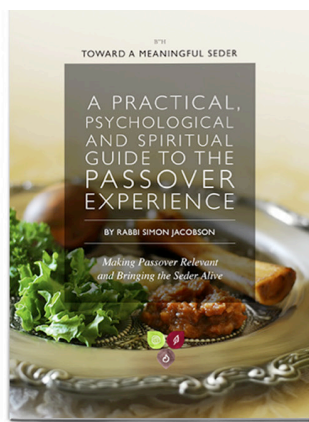
14. HALLEL — RECITING PSALMS OF PRAISE LET GO

After we have done everything in our power to achieve freedom, we say Hallel and through these words of praise we place ourselves in G-d's hands. We surrender to G-d to complete whatever we cannot do on our own and to conclude the process of reaching complete freedom.

15. NIRTZAH — G-D'S PROMISE TO ACCEPT OUR SERVICE REDEMPTION

Unlike the previous 14 steps, this last and final step does not manifest itself in any prayer or action. We have reached a point that transcends words and praise. After we have completed our Seder service, we are accepted favorably—nirtzah—by G-d. As such we are ready for the final and complete freedom and redemption.

NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM!



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Access the deeply transformative power of the Seder. This printable guide has 36 pages of insights, exercises and relevant stories that will inspire your experience.

Rabbi Jacobson's Toward a Meaningful Seder Guide has the power to transform the Seder into a dynamic experience and a dialogue - instead of a mechanical and boring routine.

