

CALCULATING FRIDAY NIGHT MAZAL MAADIM FOR THOSE WHO DON'T MAKE KIDDUSH DURING THIS TIME

THE RED HOUR



By Rabbi Dovid Heber

Rov of Khal Ahavas Yisroel Tzemach Tzedek, Baltimore, Maryland

לע"נ רבקה ח'י' הינדע ע"ה בת הרב אשר הלוי שיח'י, נפ' י"ט אדר ב' תשע"ד

IN MEMORY OF OUR DEAR COUSIN REBBETZIN RIVKIE BARBER (NEE HEBER) A"H, SHLUCHA TO MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.

There is a well-known minhag not to recite Kiddush on Friday night between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. The reason is as follows:

There are seven mazalos that are meshameish (serve and impact) each hour. The first hour of the week¹ begins with the mazal of Kochav (Mercury). The second hour is Levana (Moon), followed by Shabtai (Saturn), Tzedek (Jupiter), Maadim (Mars), Chamah (Sun) and Nogah (Venus). The cycle then starts again. The mazal of Maadim (Mars) is meshameish the first hour of Friday night/leil Shabbos. Since Maadim (Mars, the red planet) is the mazal of cherev and puraniyos² (destruction and tzoros), some observe the custom of not reciting Kiddush during this hour.³

- 1 See below for how this time is calculated.
- 2 *Rashi, Shabbos* 129b.
- 3 See *Magein Avrohom, Orach Chaim* 271:1

When is Mazal Maadim on Friday Night?

There is much discussion as to how to calculate the "Hour of Friday Night Mazal Maadim" (hereafter referred to as Mazal Maadim). Three possibilities are as follows:

1. The first hour of Shabbos, regardless of what time it starts (i.e., during the winter it would be earlier than the summer).
2. Six hours after chatzos hayom (midday, known as chatzos ha'amiti or the time each day when the sun is at the highest point in the sky, halfway between sunrise and sunset). This time would cause a fluctuation of

about 30 minutes, as chatzos moves back and forth during the course of the year. (As discussed further, it is earlier in November and later in February.)

3. Six hours after the average chatzos hayom (known as chatzos ha'emtza'i, see explanation below).

The minhag Chabad (for those who are careful about this) is to calculate Mazal Maadim using the third way.⁴ Other kehilos that are careful about this also use the third method.⁵

This means that the time of Mazal Maadim in every city is different but that that time remains the same every Friday night—it does not change—except for being one hour later during

who says that a preferable option is to recite *Kiddush* in the previous hour during the *mazal* of Tzedek. See also *Machtzis Hashekel* (ibid.) and *Shulchan Aruch Admor Hazaken* 271:3.

4 See *Kovetz Yagdil Torah* v.27 p.70. Also see *Kovetz Yagdil Torah* v.34 p.107 and the *diyuk* from the terminology of the *Shulchan Aruch Admor Hazoken* 271:3.

5 See *Sefer Yisroel V'Hazmanim* 27:14 second to last paragraph.

Daylight Saving Time (DST). It also means that in the winter Mazal Maadim will typically begin more than an hour after Shabbos begins and in the summer Mazal Maadim is over before sunset.

How does one calculate Mazal Maadim/six hours after chatzos ha'emtz'a'i? Until Standard Time began, Mazal Maadim always began at 6 p.m. and, therefore, people did not make Kid-dush between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. every Friday night. This is still the case in locations that do not have to change their clocks due to Standard Time (e.g. Denver and Memphis as will be explained later). In such locations, chatzos fluctuates between about 15 minutes before noon (in November) and about 15 minutes after noon (in February). The mean time (technically the average time) for midday/chatzos (chatzos ha'emtz'a'i) is noon. Six hours later is 6 p.m., making that the time for Mazal Maadim on Friday night. Of course, DST makes it one hour later (7 p.m.-8 p.m.).

Standard Time and Its Impact on Mazal Maadim

What is Standard Time and what impact did it have on this custom? Before 1883, there were dozens of time zones in the United States. At any given moment, different cities had different times. For example, when it was noon in Philadelphia, it was 12:04 p.m. in New York, 11:54 a.m. in Baltimore, and 12:16 p.m. in Boston.

With the expansion of the railroad system, all these different time zones became a dangerous nightmare for train conductors, captains of ships, and travelers having to keep track of the different times and schedules in each city. To alleviate this problem, on November 18, 1883, Standard Time began and time in the United States was divided into four time zones, which are still in use until this day (although each time zone has undergone numerous adjustments and re-alignments over the years). The center of each time zone is the longitudinal line that

is divisible by 15. So, the center of the Eastern Time Zone is the 75° W line that runs through Philadelphia (the northeast section). The center of the Central Time Zone is the 90° W line that runs through Memphis. Denver on the 105° W line is in the center of Mountain Time, and Reno, Nevada (the western part of the city) on the 120° W line, is in the center of Pacific Time.

Individuals in these cities or anywhere on “center of time zone longitudinal lines” did not have to change their clocks back then, however everyone else did. New York “artificially” moved its clock back four minutes. This means that chatzos ha'emtz'a'i (average noon) in New York also moved four minutes back to 11:56 a.m. So, Mazal Maadim in New York became (and still is) 5:56-6:56 p.m. (Note that the change to Standard Time had an additional impact on zemanai hayom such as sunrise, Minchah Gedolah, sunset, and many other zemanim. For example, zemanim are much earlier in Boston, where they turned their clocks 16 minutes back, than in Pittsburgh, where they turned their clocks 20 minutes ahead.) DST in the summer artificially changes the clock ahead one hour between March and November. This causes Mazal Maadim to move to 7-8 p.m. (and in New York 6:56-7:56 p.m.)

Calculating Mazal Maadim in Your Location

How does one calculate Mazal Maadim in his specific location? The answer is by determining how many degrees longitude one is from the center of the time zone he is in (and adding an hour if there is DST). One needs to understand the following: Every degree to the west of the center line means that Mazal Maadim begins and ends four minutes later than 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. This is because for each degree to the west, chatzos ha'emtz'a'i is four minutes later. Every degree to the east is four minutes earlier. One quarter of a degree, confusingly

known as 15 minutes of longitude (each minute is symbolized by '- there are 60 minutes in a degree and there are 60 seconds [symbolized by "] in a minute), to the east is one minute earlier. Therefore, the zemanim in Far Rockaway are one minute earlier than the zemanim in Boro Park and Mazal Maadim there is 5:55-6:55 p.m. [Even short distances cause minor changes. In the latitudes for much of the United States, if one simply goes about 0.22 miles to the west (i.e., 1/4', which is 15'- the equivalent of about 1.5 avenue blocks in Manhattan), zemanim, including chatzos ha'emtz'a'i and Mazal Maadim, are one second later! So, the zmanim at 8th Avenue are 2 seconds later than the zmanim 3 blocks to the east at 5th Avenue!] It should be noted that latitude does not impact the time of chatzos. Only longitude impacts the time of chatzos and Mazal Maadim.

Here are some examples of how to make the calculation.

Yerushalayim is about 35 1/4 °E. It is in the time zone that is centered at 30°E, two hours east of Greenwich (Greenwich, a suburb of London, England is 0°). So, chatzos ha'emtz'a'i in Yerushalayim is 21 minutes before noon, making Mazal Maadim between 5:39 and 6:39 p.m.

The longitude of Detroit is 83° W. Since it is in the Eastern Time Zone, which is centered at 75°W, it is 8° to the west of the center and therefore chatzos ha'emtz'a'i is 32 minutes later, making Mazal Maadim 6:32-7:32 p.m. Southfield, MI, a suburb with a large Jewish kehillah, is an additional 15' to the west, so Mazal Maadim is one minute later, 6:33-7:33 p.m.

University City, Missouri, a suburb of S. Louis, is at 90° 21' W, so Mazal Maadim begins 24 seconds after 6:01 p.m. Therefore, the easiest way to state Mazal Maadim is 6:01-7:02 p.m. Indeed, for many locations, to avoid the use of seconds, it may be advisable to be careful about Mazal Maadim for a span of one hour and one minute.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Making Kiddush During Mazal Maadim: Yes or No?

The wording of the Alter Rebbe in his Shulchan Aruch¹ is "יש נזהרים" not to make Kiddush during the first hour of the night [on Friday night]. "יש נזהרים" literally means that there are those who are careful. It is not a chiyuv in hilchos Kiddush, but rather a zehirus [meticulous practice]. As is well known, the prevalent minhag among Lubavitcher Chassidim is to be machmir.²

Ideally, one should be machmir in his own home if and when possible. In a letter written 25 Tammuz, 5721, the Rebbe negates the idea that the mitzvah of hosting guests should override this zehirus. Although the host has a mitzvah to host his guests, and that mitzvah of hachnosas orchim should protect him from any harm of saying Kiddush at that time, the guests do not have a mitzvah to be guests, and therefore they do not have that mitzvah to protect them at that time. And, since the guests should wait out the hour, the host has no mitzvah to protect him when choosing to make Kiddush during the said hour.

This certainly resonates when one has guests who are also generally machmir. Furthermore, even when having guests who are not particular, it is advisable l'chatchila to schedule the seuda in a manner that avoids the necessity of making Kiddush during this hour. However, if someone has guests or children who are hungry and one would have to wait a long time until this hour ends, numerous poskim rule that one should be maykil to make Kiddush during this hour. The same leniency may apply to shluchim who are unable to wait to begin their seudah after the end of the local Mazal Maadim time. This is especially true in cases where guests will not attend if the seudah starts



so late or at large seudos. When in doubt, consult with your rov or moreh hora'ah.

Does this minhag apply in Eretz Yisroel?

Although there is much discussion about this, the answer seems to be yes – ideally one should be careful in Eretz Yisroel, as well.

Can one be maykil by using white wine during this hour?

There seems to be no basis to be more maykil with white wine during this hour and therefore one should still be careful. Indeed, Mazal Maadim relates to Mars, the "red planet," but it is a hanhaga that relates to the hour, not to the matching color of wine. Similarly, making Kiddush on Friday night on challah (which is permissible bshaas hadchak if wine or grape juice are not available) during Mazal Maadim should also be avoided by those who are careful about this.

Does this minhag apply to yom tov during Mazal Maadim?

For example, if Shavuos is Thursday night, Mazal Maadim in New York would be from 9:56 – 10:56 p.m. EDT. Should one not recite Kiddush during this time? The Piskei Teshuvos Siman 271 note 45 says the minhag is to be maykil.

Mazal maadim also starts on Shabbos at 1:00 a.m., 8:00 a.m., and 3:00 p.m.

Does this zehirus also apply for Shabbos morning Kiddush?

Again the answer is negative as there is no established custom to refrain from making Kiddush during these times; we only seek to avoid ushering in Shabbos during Mazal Maadim.

1 271:3.

2 Kovetz Yagdil Torah NY 7:15.

How does one determine the longitude of his location? One way is to check an almanac. Alternatively, www.maptechnica.com is a website that can tell you exact longitudes of communities in the United States. For other places, Wikipedia usually shows the longitude, as well. Google the city and the Wikipedia site usually comes up. Confirm that the longitude is accurate by copying and pasting both the longitude and latitude into Google maps and seeing whether the correct location comes up. You may need to adjust the longitude if you are in a different part of town. Once you determine the time zone of the location, you need to determine the central longitudinal line. For Universal Time (UT), i.e. Greenwich and all of England, it is 0°, for UT-1 it is 15° W for UT +1 it is 15° E, and so forth. [For U.S. time zones, see above.] Then, add or subtract the number of minutes

necessary based on the exact location as described above.

Some may find the following method easier, though a brief introduction is necessary. There are several days a year when chatzos ha'amiti and chatzos ha'emtzai are identical. This happens on December 25, April 16, June 15 and September 1 (subtract an hour from the DST on the last three days). In other words, on these days, at locations at the center of the time zone (e.g., Denver), chatzos (i.e. chatzos ha'amiti) is at noon (the same time as chatzos ha'emtzai). So, another way to determine Mazal Maadim at any location is to find out what time chatzos (noon) is on December 25 and add six hours. This time is Mazal Maadim.

For example, chatzos on December 25 in Pittsburgh is at 12:20 p.m., which matches the fact that Pittsburgh is at 80° W, 5 degrees west of the center

of the Eastern time zone (5 degrees west x 4 minutes = +20 minutes). Indeed, in Pittsburgh, Mazal Maadim on every Friday night begins at 6:20 p.m. (and one hour later when there is DST). One can determine chatzos on December 25 by checking the local luach, by visiting the zmanim section of www.chabad.org or visiting www.timeanddate.com.

The above methods should assist those who are careful about this minhag to determine the correct time of Mazal Maadim on Friday night/leil Shabbos so that Kiddush can be recited in its proper time.

The author thanks Dayan Levi Yitzchok Raskin, shliach to London and Rabbi Sholom Ber Wineberg, shliach to Overland Park, KS, for their invaluable assistance in preparing this article and their subsequent review.

A FASCINATING DISCUSSION WITH YOUR GUESTS ABOUT MAZALOS AND THE NAMES OF THE DAYS OF THE WEEK

Those who are careful not to recite Kiddush during the mazal of Maadim know that most people, even other frumeh Yidden, are not familiar with this minhag. If mazalos come up in discussion, your guests will certainly find the following information quite enlightening and discover that the mazalos are referenced daily by millions of English, French, and Spanish speaking citizens worldwide!

A brief introduction is necessary. It is well known that we, Klal Yisroel, begin our calendar day at night,¹ yet other religions begin their day in the morning.² So, their calendar days historically

went from sunrise to sunrise beginning on average at 6:00 a.m. – the average time of sunrise (the calendar day in use today has the “beginning of the day” earlier, at 12:00 midnight; this is beyond our discussion).

As indicated in the article, there are seven mazalos that are meshameish (serve and impact) each hour and every day of the week starts with a different mazal. Whatever a particular mazal was at 6:00 am (i.e. when their calendar day began) on any given day has great significance to other nations. Indeed the days of the week in English, French and other languages are named for the first hour of the day's mazal. The following illustrates this: On the first day of the week, the mazal at 6:00 a.m. is Chama, the sun. That is why it is called SUNday. On the second day of the week, at 6:00 a.m. the mazal

is Levana, the moon. That's why it is called MONday. In Spanish it is called Lunes, also a reference to the moon (as in lunar). On Tuesday at 6:00 a.m., the mazal is Maadim which is Mars. In French this day is called Mardi, which means Mars Day.

Wednesday in French is Mercredi, meaning Mercury Day, since the 6:00 a.m. mazal is Kochav (Mercury). Thursday in French is Jeudi, which means Jupiter Day, since the 6:00 a.m. mazal is Tzedek (Jupiter). Friday in French is Vendredi, which means Venus Day. The mazal at 6:00 a.m. on Friday is Nogah (Venus). Shabbos in English is, of course, called Saturday. The mazal at 6:00 a.m. on Shabbos is Shabtai, which is Saturn, the basis of the name Saturday.

How interesting it is that the understanding of mazalos that Klal Yisroel has preserved through minhagim and that are addressed in sugyos in Shas and explained in rich detail by Rashi and other Rishonim are the basis of the very names of the days of the week that much of the world uses until this day!

1 as it states in Parshas Beraishis, "ויהי ערב ויהי בקר".

2 See Meshech Chochmah on Megilas Esther "לקיים" for an interesting discussion on how this impacts the holiday of Purim.