

# Koreich

Contributed by [Hillel at UCLA](#)

Source:

Mixing the Bitter and the Sweet - Eating a sandwich of matzah and bitter herb | *koreich* | כּוֹרֵיךְ

*Ze-cher le-mik-dash ke-Hil-el*

When the Temple stood in Jerusalem, the biggest ritual of them all was eating the lamb offered as the pesach or Passover sacrifice. The great sage Hillel would put the meat in a sandwich made of matzah, along with some of the bitter herbs. While we do not make sacrifices any more we honor this custom by eating a sandwich of the remaining matzah and bitter herbs. Some people will also include charoset in the sandwich to remind us that God's kindness helped relieve the bitterness of slavery. This moment is also known as the Hillel sandwich.

What a strange custom to eat something so bitter and something so sweet all in one bite. Why do we do such a thing? We do it to tell our story.

We tell our story through our observance of Jewish holidays throughout the year. The holidays of Passover, Chanukah and Purim remind us just how close the Jewish people has come to utter destruction and how we now celebrate our strength and our survival with great joy, remembering God's help and our persistence, and our own determination to survive.

We also tell the story throughout our lifetime of Jewish rituals. The breaking of a glass at a Jewish wedding reminds us that even in times of life's greatest joys we remember the sadness of the destruction of the Temple. When we build a home, some Jews leave a part unfinished to remember that even when building something new, we sense the times of tragedy in the Jewish people. And on Passover we mix the sweet charoset with the bitter maror, mixing bitter and sweet of slavery and freedom all in one bite.

Throughout each year and throughout our lifetimes, we challenge ourselves to remember that even in times of strength, it is important to sense our vulnerability, rather than solely bask in our success. We all have memories of times in which bitter and sweet were mixed in our lives, all in the same bite. Judaism says, sometimes life is like that. We can celebrate and mourn all at the same time. And somehow, everything will be ok. Let's take some time now to reflect on the "oys and joys" of Jewish life. What is your korech moment?