

HALACHIC ISSUES FOR PESACH 2010/5770
 KEHAL MACHZIKEI HADAS - CLANTON PARK
 TORONTO
 RABBI YEHOShUA WEBER

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CLEANING

We clean our homes of all *chametz* products before *Pesach* because, on *Pesach*, even the ownership of *chametz* is forbidden. The prime contemporary reason for *chametz* eradication is that, accustomed as we are to eating *chametz* year round, we might, in an act of momentary forgetfulness, consume a piece of *chametz*.¹ Therefore, we only eradicate accessible, “consumable” *chametz*, *chametz* that might be inadvertently eaten. *Chametz* that is not accessible is dealt with by *bittul*, i.e., the nullification that is read after the *bedika* and before the burning of the *chametz*; ripping out car seats to find possible *chametz* crumbs is generally unnecessary.

Strictly speaking, all grain products, e.g., liquor, beer etc., ought to be disposed of before *Pesach*. Nevertheless, elimination of the sort, in a world in which many people have large quantities of preserved *chametz* products, would entail great difficulty. And so, for many years now, broad swaths of the community² have relied on lenient sources that validate the sale of *chametz* to a non-Jew.³ The *chametz*, which is set aside in a segregated area, is then legally transferred to non-Jewish ownership. Given the potential issues with a sale of this sort, some people opt not to rely on this leniency. Those people would discard rather than sell their *chametz*.

ALCOHOL & INEDIBLE CHAMETZ

Grain alcohol is a fermentation product, and is, therefore, *chametz*, according to most contemporary authorities.⁴ Edible items containing grain alcohol such as whisky, liquor or liquid medications are certainly forbidden. Some recommend being stringent with perfumes and with other liquid inedibles with an ethyl alcohol base because that alcohol might be grain based.⁵ Such alcohol, even if it is currently denatured, i.e., inedible, can, conceptually, be reconstituted and might, therefore, be considered *chametz*. Those adopting this stringency should use *Pesach* certified perfumes and alcohol based liquid inedibles. For a variety of reasons, others are lenient with items of the sort. Inedible solid products containing grain alcohol (or any other *chametz*, for that matter), e.g., lotions, soaps and items such as shampoo, shoe polish, ink, pure talc powder, cleansers, shaving lotions, paints, floor waxes etc. are permissible for *Pesach* use.

¹ *Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 4b*

² *Bach, OC, 448, Vi'im*

³ *Tosefta, Pesachim, 2, 6*

⁴ *Sedei Chemed, Chametz u'Matzah, 8, 28*

⁵ *Levushai Mordechai, 86*

Nevertheless, here too, given *chumras Pesach*, even totally inedible items that have a clear *chametz* base, i.e., wheat & oat based soaps, are best avoided.

BEDIKAS CHAMETZ

Although the house has been thoroughly cleaned, we are still obligated to perform the rabbinic *mitzva* of searching for *chametz* on the night that precedes *Pesach*. The search occurs on Sunday, March 28. The *beracha*, *al bi'ur chametz* is recited prior to beginning the search. The *beracha* introduces both the search and the *bittul*, i.e., the nullification that is read immediately after the search. The nullification is a *halachic* dissociation from *chametz* that was overlooked during the search.⁶

It is forbidden to talk at all between the *beracha* and the beginning of the *bedika*. It is best not to discuss matters extraneous to the *bedika* from the moment that the *beracha* is made until the *bedika* and the subsequent nullification are complete.⁷ The search is carried out with a single-wick candle or a flashlight.⁸ The traditional feel of a candle and the safety and ease of a flashlight can be melded. Make the *beracha*, begin the *bedika* with a candle and, for the finer parts of the *bedika* and for the children who are assisting, use a flashlight.

Many rationales are offered for the *minhag* of some to place 10 pieces⁹ of bread before the search begins:

- a) to add a level of excitement to the search.¹⁰
 - b) to ensure that some bread is found so that the *bedika beracha* should thereby be validated.¹¹
 - c) to ascertain that *chametz* will remain for the burning / *bittul* ceremony the following morning.¹²
- Some find this tradition disconcerting¹³ because bandying *chametz* around the home right before *Pesach* is a dangerous thing indeed. Try to limit the potential problem of an unfound piece of *chametz* by limiting the 10 pieces of *chametz* to less than a *ke'zayis*¹⁴ (27 grams) each. As in other arenas of conflicting *halachic* opinion, follow your family's tradition. If you are unsure as to what that your tradition is, place the bread.

The pieces are gathered during the course of the search. Upon concluding the search, the *bittul* (nullification) is read. The text of the *bittul* is found in most Haggados. Understanding the text is imperative. People who find Aramaic difficult to understand should familiarize themselves with the meaning of the text or recite the nullification in a comprehensible language.¹⁵ A free

⁶ *Rashi & Tosafos, Pesachim 4b, Rambam, Chametz u'Matzah, 2, 2*

⁷ *Shulchan Arukh, OC, 432, 1*

⁸ *She'arim Metzuyanim bi'Halacha, 11, 4* who notes that incandescent electric light is considered "flame" in other *halachic* arenas as well. Responsa *Be'er Moshe* who prefers a flashlights where it allows for a more effective *bedika*

⁹ *Arizal based on Bavli, Pesachim 10a*

¹⁰ *Chok Ya'akov, OC, 432, 14*

¹¹ *Rema, OC, 432, 2*

¹² *Mahari Weil, 193*

¹³ *Taz, OC, 432, 4*

¹⁴ *Sha'arei Teshuva, 433, 3*

¹⁵ *Mahari Weil, 193, Mishneh Berurah, 434, 9*

translation of the nullification follows: "All leaven that may be in my possession, whether or not I have seen it and whether or not I have I have removed it, should be considered void and I relinquish my ownership of it. It should be considered as the dust of the ground."

There is considerable debate as to when to do *bedikas chametz*. Although the *bedika* is meant to take place at night, some would begin the checking process right after sunset (well before *halachic* night which begins with *tzais ha'kochavim*, the appearance of three stars in the night sky.¹⁶) The more common tradition is to do the *bedika* after *tzais ha'kochavim*.¹⁷ Although defining *tzais ha'kochavim* is also a matter of considerable debate, here, according to most, it is unnecessary to wait until Rabbainu Tam's later *tzais ha'kochavim*; begin to check from 7:52, at the early end of the *halachic* nightfall range.¹⁸

BEDIKAS CHAMETZ OUTSIDE THE HOME

Individuals who are leaving for *Pesach* and who will, therefore, not be home the night before *Pesach*, perform the *bedika* in their homes without a *beracha* on the night before they leave.¹⁹ (Individuals who will not be home for the entire *Pesach* have the option of "selling" large swaths of their home and cleaning and doing a *bedika* on the "unsold part." (Apprise your *rav* of the details to ensure the appropriate handling of particulars.) Individuals who will be in a hotel room the night before *Pesach* do the *bedika* in their hotel room with a *beracha*, just as they would at home.²⁰ Those who are spending *Pesach* at friends' or relatives' homes and will be at those homes the night before *Pesach* should listen to the *beracha* of the owner of the house and perform the *bedika* in the room in which they are staying.²¹ (Although these individuals will later be reading the nullification, a verbal nullification is not reason enough to require a personal *beracha*.)

KASHERING

It is best to have special *Pesach* utensils. Earthenware and synthetic²² utensils are non-*kasherable*. If need be, certain metal and glass utensils may be *kashered*. Silverware, metal pots in which items are cooked via a liquid medium and metal table cutlery can be *kashered* through the standard *hagalah* process, i.e., immersion in a *keli rishon*, a *Pesach* or *kashered chametzdik* pot that has been brought to a boil. Knives with serrated edges or with attached handles or silverware with grooves that cannot be well cleaned are more difficult to *kasher*. The *kashering* should occur at least 24 hours after the surface has been thoroughly cleaned. Standard glass used for hot foods is a matter of debate, with Ashkenazim veering towards stringency and equating glass with earthenware and Sephardim veering towards leniency.²³ Drinking glasses that were not used for hot *chametz* can, in cases of necessity, be *kashered* through a *milui v'irui* process, i.e., filling glasses with water for three 24-hour periods and

¹⁶ *Magen Avraham*, OC, 431, 4

¹⁷ *Arukh ha'Shulchan*, OC, 431, 25, *Mishneh Berurah* 431, 1

¹⁸ *Mo'adim u'Zemanin*, 3, 286

¹⁹ *Shulchan Arukh*, OC, 436, 1

²⁰ *Siddur Pesach ke'Hilkhaso*, 12, 8

²¹ *Shibolai ha'Leket*, 4, 44

²² *Iggeros Moshe*, OC, 2, 92. Although this is a debatable matter, for *Pesach* we are stringent.

²³ *Shulchan Arukh*, OC, 451, 26

changing the water for each one of those periods. Sinks, stovetops and all surfaces normally used for food should be readied for *Pesach* use. Metallic sink surfaces can be *kashered*. These surfaces must first be thoroughly cleaned and then dried. The sink should then remain unused for 24 hours. Water should then be boiled in a *chametzdik* pot that had not been used in the past 24 hours. The boiling water should then be poured on all parts of the sink, including the faucet. The faucet should be swiveled to ensure that the boiling water reaches all of it, in its entirety. Sink filters with small mesh holes should be replaced; filters with large holes can be *kashered* with hot water. Enamel and Formica must be covered. *Chametzdik* dish racks, sink racks, washbasins and *blechs* should not be used.

Self-cleaning ovens should be thoroughly cleaned and *kashered* by running a self-clean cycle. Regular ovens should be cleaned thoroughly with an "Easy Off" type cleaner and set on the highest setting for an hour and a half. Continuous clean ovens, which cannot tolerate abrasive "Easy Off" type cleaners, are trickier. Keeping the oven at 450 degrees for a few hours should allow the continuous clean properties to deep clean. The cleaning action might need to be supplemented with application of non-abrasive cleaner. Follow that with a one hour broil cycle. Some claim that regular / continuous clean ovens do not become hot enough to effect a thorough *kashering* and require these ovens to either (a) be blowtorched (something that should only be done by people well acquainted with activity of the sort) or (b) have special inserts.²⁴ These stricter opinions would also require that the regular / continuous clean oven racks be placed in a self-clean oven for a cycle, be changed, be blowtorched or be covered. In this area, as in most areas, follow your family *minhag*. If you do not have a clear *minhag*, the fact that food is not placed directly on the oven racks is reason enough to allow yourself to follow the more lenient opinion.

Stovetop grates should be placed in a self-clean oven for a cycle (be careful-they might become discoloured in the process) or burnt out on top of the stove by covering them with a kettle, *blech* or a layering of aluminum foil and turning on the flame full force for ten minutes. Ensure that the hot aluminum foil does not extend beyond the stovetop where it can touch, and possibly melt, the plastic knobs. Between-the-grates stovetop areas that are stainless steel can be *kashered* by having the entire area covered with aluminum foil during the burning out process. If the area is enamel, it should be covered for *Pesach*. *Kashering* / covering this area is necessary because a trickling overflow might connect pot and *chametzdik* stovetop. If the grates lift the pot off the stove and will prevent this scenario from arising and you also never slide the pot onto that stovetop area (and you are also habituated not to eat food that falls onto that area), then such stovetop *kashering* / covering, where difficult (as for instance with the glass stovetops that we will soon discuss), is unnecessary.

Glass stovetops are trickier because covering them with a *blech* or with aluminum foil can cause small cracks in the glass. *Kashering* should, therefore, occur in one of the following ways. A) After *kashering* the burners as previously outlined, run a blowtorch over the surface of the glass. Cracks can be avoided by quickly moving the torch back and forth over the entire surface so that there is a uniform rise in temperature. B) Use a metal ring in the cook top area and place your pots on top of that so that the pot does not touch the glass top surface. This will affect cooking efficiency. C) Kasher the burner area only, the way grates are *kashered*, by covering

²⁴ *She'arim Metzuyanin be'Halakha*, 116, 2

them with a kettle, blech or a layering of aluminum foil and turning on the flame full force for ten minutes. With both methods B and C, the outlying areas will not be *kashered* and cannot, therefore, be used. Given that, pots should be slid onto trivets rather than onto the outlying areas. Those following course C will face difficulty in cooking with large pots that extend beyond the *kashered* burner area.

Microwave ovens can be *kashered*, after a thorough cleaning, by boiling water from a Pyrex dish inside the microwave until a thick steam permeates the entire microwave. Turntables should nevertheless be changed / covered (a sheet of Styrofoam works well here). Given the affordability of small microwave units, and the difficulty of cleaning the fan area, consider buying a special *Pesach* unit. Follow standard oven *kashering* procedures for convection microwave ovens that are also used in the convection mode. Follow microwave *kashering* procedures for convection microwaves that are never used in convection mode. As mentioned, all utensils should remain unused for the twenty four-hour period that precedes their *kashering*. Warming drawers should not be *kashered* because the heat settings do not go high enough to effect *kashering*. The warming drawer should be cleaned, sealed, and not used for *Pesach*.

Broilers, barbecues and griddles which have food broiled or roasted directly on them must to be heated to a glow in order to effect *kashering*. This requires blowtorching (something that should only be done by people well acquainted with activity of the sort). Or you can replace the broiler pan and/or the barbecue grates. The empty broiler space must still be *kashered* by cleaning it and setting it to broil for an hour. The part of the barbecue which the food can touch (the part that is level with the grate) must also be *kashered* by heating it to a glow. If you do not intend to use the broiler, you can still use your oven - just thoroughly clean the broiler as you would anything else.

KITNIYOS

Ashkenazim do not eat legumes (*kitniyos*) - beans, corn, peas, rice, etc. and products containing them as ingredients, throughout *Pesach*. Some include peanuts in the ban; some also include *kitniyos* derivatives such as peanut oil. Follow your tradition. If you are unsure as to what your tradition is, you may be lenient with peanuts, peanut oil and the like.²⁵ The *kitniyos* tradition arose because *kitniyos* were frequently stored together with grain.²⁶ Alternatively, *kitniyos* were banned because flour and bread like items can be produced from legumes.²⁷ Potatoes (from which potato starch is made) while included in the initial ban according to some, were permitted because of famine.²⁸ Others claim that potatoes were not banned simply because they were unknown in Europe at the time the ban's promulgation.²⁹ Sephardic, Yemenite and Oriental Jewish customs vary from community to community. Please note that imported Israeli foods containing *kitniyos* may nevertheless be labelled Kosher for *Pesach*.

²⁵ *Iggeros Moshe, OC, 3, 63*

²⁶ *Bais Yosef, OC, 453*

²⁷ *Mordechai, Pesachim, 2, 688*

²⁸ *Nishmas Adam*

²⁹ *Tiferes Shelomo*

MEDICATIONS

A troubling issue that I confront, Pesach after Pesach, (and for that matter, Yom Kippur after Yom Kippur) is the spectre of ill people refusing their medications because of that medication's alleged *chametz* component(s). To reiterate a point that I have repeatedly made: few, if any non-chewable pills, contain *chametz* in their ingredient base. Nevertheless, even if they do contain *chametz*, non-chewable pills are swallowed; they are not eaten, they offer no pleasure to the palate, nor are they edible. Such pills are not food and such ingestion is not a form of eating. *All non-chewable, solid medications (all pills and all capsules) are permissible on Pesach, for any and all illnesses, for any and all people. They need no certification and channelling effort into researching the ingredient base of these pills exacerbates a climate in which ill people endanger their lives in a mistaken attempt at halachic observance.* Most adult medications fall within the framework of this leniency. Including vitamins within the scope of this leniency is not clear, but I would include vitamins ingested because of a clear medical need, e.g., neonatal pills.

Liquid medications are a wholly different matter. Liquid medications if they contain *chametz*, because of their pleasant taste, are, indeed, considered bona fide *chametz*. Medications such as these should, therefore, only be used if properly certified. Nevertheless, one would be allowed to take even uncertified liquid medications if medically necessary and if no adequate substitutes can be found. One needing such medications should purchase them before Pesach and consult a rav about how to store and how to consume such medications over the course of Pesach. Liquid and chewable medications that contain kitniyos but no *chametz* may be consumed by someone ill (ill to the point that one would be recuperating in bed) or by a young child who is facing even slight discomfort. The prepared Pesach lists are valuable in ascertaining the status of these medications. Please remember that there are additional issues involving the consumption of medicines on Shabbos and Yom Tov that require discussion with a competent halachic authority.

EGG MATZAH AND WHITE GRAPE MATZAH

Matzah made with fruit juice or eggs, including Egg Matzah, Chocolate Covered Egg Matzah, and White Grape Matzah are not permitted on *Pesach* according to the European tradition. Although there is room for leniency for the ill and for those who cannot digest regular matzah, you would be hard pressed to rely on this leniency when there is a plethora of other food available.³⁰ Matzah made with fruit juice or eggs certainly does not qualify for the *seder*.

SEDER MATZAH

The three matzos are placed on the *seder* table to:

- a) represent the three kinds of Jews: *Kohen, Levi* and *Yisroel*.
- b) represent our three *avos*, our forefathers.
- c) remind us that there are three times during the course of the *seder* when matzah must be eaten - at the beginning of the *seder* meal, when the *beracha* over matzah is made, for the *korech* (Hillel Sandwich) when the matzah is eaten together with the *maror*, and at the end of the meal, for the *afikoman*.

At the beginning of the *seder*, the middle matzah is broken in two. The larger part³¹, the *afikoman*, is hidden. The *afikoman* is eaten as a remembrance for the non-extant *korban Pesach*. The *korban Pesach* was eaten at the end of the meal. The *afikoman* is, therefore, also eaten at the end of the meal.

MATZAH SHEMURA

Matzah is prepared from the flour of grains that have not been washed, and have been processed under supervision, completely protected from any contact with water. Matzah must be made with *mayim shelanu*, water that has been stored overnight. The matzah can be manufactured either by hand or by machine. The dough must be pummeled constantly. If it is left idle for longer than 18 minutes it becomes *chametz*. It is rolled into thin sheets and then baked. All equipment used in the preparation of matzah must be constantly cleaned of dough crumbs, and the oven in which matzah is baked must be set at the proper baking temperature. Properly certified matzos are manufactured with care and are absolutely kosher. Nevertheless it is important to use *matzah shemura*, which is “guarded matzah” for the *seder*. This is because there are opinions requiring the *seder* matzos to be produced *lishmah*, for the sake of the *mitzva* that is to be done with them. *Matzah shemura* can be either machine or hand baked. German Jews generally favour machine matzos; most other Jews favour the hand baked version.

GEBROKTS

Once matzah has been baked properly, leavening can no longer occur, and the product can no longer become *chametz*. Therefore, matzah products such as ground matzah meal, flour or farfel may be cooked in hot water, baked or blended with any variety of *Pesach* ingredients. People who do not eat *gebrokts* (they do not allow their matzah to come in contact with water) are concerned that there might be a small bit of raw flour that will become *chametz* if we expose it to water now.³²

MAROR

Is a reminder of bitter Jewish suffering at the hands of the Egyptians. Many people use ground horseradish. Many recommend grating the *maror* before the *Yom Tov* begins, because of *Yom Tov* grinding issues.³³ If you follow that point of view, and did not have a chance to grate the *maror* before *Yom Tov*, grate your *maror* on *Yom Tov* with a *shinui*, i.e., a change in normal routine. The *shinui* can be achieved by holding the grater upside down or grating onto a piece of paper rather than onto a dish.³⁴ Others would actually grind their *maror* on *Yom Tov* as they would all year. Either way, if you do grind your *maror* on *Yom Tov*, prepare the amount that is needed for that night only. Preparing extra for the following night would be a violation of *hachana*, i.e. preparing on *Yom Tov* for the next day. *Maror* that has soaked in liquid of any sort for more than 24 hours has its bitterness muted during the soaking process and is, therefore, disqualified. Commercially prepared horseradish that has water or vinegar added to it is unacceptable.³⁵

³¹ *Mishneh Berurah* 473, 58

³² *Sha'arei Teshuvah* 460, 10

³³ *Mishneh Berurah* 473, 19

³⁴ *Rema, OC*, 504,1

³⁵ *Shulchan Arukh, OC*, 473, 5

Many people use Romaine lettuce. They should be cleaned thoroughly. Here too, do not allow the lettuce to soak in liquid for more than 24 hours. Therefore, if the second day *maror* supply was cleaned before *Yom Tov* began do not allow it to soak over the first day and into the second. Wrap the washed *maror* in damp paper towels instead. Romaine lettuce, while not bitter, is soft at the edges and has a hard stalk in the middle. This situation is a perfect metaphor for the Egyptian exile. The Egyptian exile, comfortable at first, gradually grew harder and harder.³⁶

ROASTED MEATBONE

This is a symbol for the *Pesach* lamb, which we brought as a *korban* on the eve of *Pesach*. This offering needed to be roasted. One explanation for the required roasting is that poor people insist on boiling rather than roasting their meat because they want to make a broth out of the meat as well. They extract as much as they can from every piece of meat. Only wealthy people can afford to roast their meats, thereby wasting the broth. On *Pesach* we are all “wealthy” and so the offering was roast. Today, given that we have no *bais ha'mikdash*, and consequentially no *Pesach* offering, we refrain from eating roast meat or fowl at the *seder* lest someone think that we are eating some sort of mock *Pesach* offering.³⁷

ROASTED EGG

This symbolizes the festival offering, the *chagiga*. In the time of the *bais ha'mikdash*, the *chagiga* was brought on all holidays. The round egg, which can roll on and on, symbolizes the continuous circle of life, the constant flux from pain to joy and the reverse. The egg is therefore also an appropriate sign of mourning. This small symbol of mourning reminds us of the *bais ha'mikdash* and of the *Pesach* offering, both of which we sorely miss.

CHAROSES

This is a mixture of nuts, cinnamon, apples and wine. It is a reminder of the clay the Jews used to make bricks to build for Pharaoh. The red wine reminds us of the spilled blood, the cinnamon sticks tell us about the straw Jews gathered for these bricks. The *maror* is dipped in the *charoses* to somewhat temper the *maror's* bitterness. We then shake the *charoses* off the *maror* so that the *charoses* does not totally negate the *maror's* bitterness.³⁸ It is easier to grate the fruits or nuts that will be added to the *charoses* mixture before *Yom Tov* and place them in the refrigerator. If you did not have a chance to grate the *maror* before *Yom Tov* and are grating the *charoses* on the first night of *Yom Tov*, only prepare the amount that you need for that night. Preparing extra for the following night would be a violation of *hachana*, i.e. preparing on *Yom Tov* for after *Yom Tov*.

KARPAS

A vegetable dipped into salt water. Some recommend preparing the salt water before *Yom Tov*.³⁹ If your *minhag* is to abide by this stringency, but you forgot to prepare it before *Yom Tov*, then, when preparing it on *Yom Tov* simply reverse the normal preparation process, i.e., if the

³⁶ *Arukh ha'Shulchan*, OC, 473, 16

³⁷ *Shulchan Arukh*, OC, 476

³⁸ *Shulchan Arukh*, OC, 475, 1

³⁹ *Chayai Adam*

salt is usually placed in the bowl first, reverse the process by placing the water first.⁴⁰ The vegetable dipped in saltwater might symbolize the Jewish people who were “down and out” like a vegetable which is near the ground being immersed in the tears of Egyptian slavery. Alternatively it might remind us of the Jews’ passing through the salt water of the Sea of Reeds. A primary reason for the *karpas* is that there is a question as to whether we make the *ha’adama beracha* on the *maror*. The doubt revolves around the fact that the *maror* is eaten during the meal, after we had already partaken of the matzah. Matzah exempts most items eaten during the course of that normal meal. Items that are not part of a normal meal, i.e., wine, certain desserts, would require their own *beracha*. The *maror* can be viewed as normal, akin to a salad vegetable or abnormal, a *mitzvah* item. And so the *ha’adama beracha* question arises. The *ha’adama beracha* that is made on the *karpas* solves the dilemma and exempts the *maror*, which follows. It is imperative, therefore, to have the *maror* in mind when the *ha’adama beracha* is made on the *karpas*.⁴¹

FOUR CUPS

The first cup of wine is the *Kiddush*. The second cup is taken at the end of the first of the three parts of the *seder*. The third cup follows the *bentching*. The fourth cup is drunk at the end of the second part of the *seder*. The number four is used because Hashem used four different verbs, all of which signify redemption, when Moshe was sent to free the Jews. The number four also talks to us about our four *imahos*, our four matriarchs, and reminds us of feminine strength. We are being reminded about the extraordinary role women (Pharaoh’s daughter who saved Moshe, the midwives who saved the Jewish children, Miriam who was responsible for Moshe’s birth) played in our redemption from Egypt.

CUP OF ELIJAHU

Some authorities believe that there should be five rather than four cups of wine at the *seder* table. The fifth cup came to be known as the Cup of Eliyahu because the *rabbonim* of old left the resolution of all unresolved questions to await the coming of the prophet Eliyahu and the Messianic era that he will bring. All of our *halachic* questions, including our debate as to whether we do or don’t need the fifth cup, will be resolved during that Messianic period. The custom of setting up a cup for Eliyahu led to the custom of opening the door during the *seder* for the entrance of this great prophet.

RECLINING

In ancient times it was customary for royalty to recline during meals. On *Pesach* night, we are all royalty. It is obligatory to eat the joyous, critical parts of the *seder*, i.e. the four cups and the matzah, while reclining to the left. The *maror*, on the other hand, because of its connotations of slavery, is not eaten in a reclining position. Ashkenazic women generally do not recline, Sephardic women generally do.⁴²

⁴⁰ *Kitzur Shulchan Arukh*, 118, 4. *The Mishneh Berurah* seems to restrict this stringency to Shabbos.

⁴¹ *Peri Megadim*, *Aishel Avraham*, 473, 4

⁴² *Shulchan Arukh*, OC, 472, 4

MEASUREMENTS FOR THE PESACH SEDORIM

MINIMUM SIZE OF WINE CUPS

For the *arba kosos* and for *kiddush*, (except on Friday night and for *Havdalah*, when *shiurim* are larger) the cup should hold at least 97.6 millilitres (3.3 ounces), of which you must drink the majority of the cup, a bit more than 1.65 oz., i.e., 49 millilitres, from each one of the *arba kosos*. If even 97.6 millilitres is too much, have the cup contain at least 86 millilitres (2.9 fluid ounces). Here too, you would be required to drink at least the majority of the cup, a bit more than 1.5 oz., i.e., 43 millilitres, from each cup. One who is using a cup that is larger than the minimum *shiur* can, if need be, still address his obligation by drinking most of the *shiur*, i.e., the same 1.65 or 1.5 oz., i.e., 49 or 43 millilitres, rather than drinking most of the actual cup, even if that cup is an 8 oz. cup. It is better, though, to drink most of the actual cup, i.e., 4 ozs. from an 8 oz. cup, and better yet to drink the entire cup, which would mean drinking all 8 ozs. from that 8 oz. cup for each of the *arba kosos*. Consuming such amounts of wine can be quite taxing. It is therefore best to use smaller cups. 100 millilitre or, if need be, 90 millilitre sherry glasses qualify and are readily available. These smaller cups allow one to comfortably drink the entire cup for each of the *arba kosos*. If you opt for large cups as a way of meeting the larger *arba kosos shiurim* recommended by some, please remember that the recommendation to drink most of the cup or, ideally, the entire cup, still stands.

WINE

1. Undiluted wine is best for the *arba kosos*. The great variety of delicious, low alcohol wines that are now available allows you to drink the *arba kosos* without becoming intoxicated in the process. (There are those who are *halachically* stringent and use unsweetened red wines that are not *mevushal* for the four cups. Those choosing to follow this stringency should be aware that the rationale for this stringency is applicable to year round *kiddush* as well).
2. If need be, you may mix the wine with grape juice.
3. If need be, Ashkenazim may dilute wine with water but make sure to have a bit more than 1/4-cup wine to 3/4 cup water. Sephardim should never dilute the mixture with more than 1/4 water.
4. If need be, you may use grape juice instead of wine. Wine is preferred, though, because intoxicating wine more aptly captures the "freedom" idea of *Pesach*.⁴³
(NOTE - The *beracha* upon all these mixtures is *hagafen*.)

MINIMUM AMOUNT OF MATZAH SHEMURAH

Everyone must eat the minimum amount of *matzah shemura* the following three times during the *seder*:

- 1) After the *beracha al achilas matzah*. This is the primary eating of matzah; e.g., this is when we perform the Torah commandment. You should attempt to eat 2/3 of a machine matzah or 1/2 of a hand-baked matzah. Someone ill can rely on the more lenient opinion, which says that 1/3 of a machine matzah or 1/4 of a hand-baked matzah suffices. The matzah should ideally be eaten within a two minute or, if need be, a four minute time span.
- 2) For *korech*, when we eat matzah and *maror* together in a sandwich, 1/3 of a machine matzah or 1/4 of a hand-baked matzah suffices.

⁴³ *Peri Megadim, Meshbetzos Zahav, OC, 472*

- 3) The *afikoman* is also considered very important and it is therefore best to eat 2/3 of a machine matzah or 1/2 of a hand-baked matzah.

If you cannot eat matzah, then *matzah shemura* meal (upon which you are permitted to recite *ha'motzi*) may be substituted as follows:

- 1 & 3) After reciting the beracha, *al achilas matzah* and *afikoman* - an amount of meal that can be compacted into a vessel measuring 1.5 fluid ounces.
- 2) For *korech* - an amount of meal that can be compacted into a vessel holding 0.75 fluid ounces.

MINIMUM AMOUNT OF MAROR

A minimum amount of *maror* is eaten twice during the *seder*. Once after the *beracha*, *al achilas maror*, and once for *korech*.

If using pure, grated horseradish, use the following amounts:

1. After reciting the *beracha*, *al achilas maror* - an amount that can be compacted into a vessel measuring 1.1 fluid ounces.
2. For *Korech* - an amount that can be compacted into a vessel measuring 0.7 fluid ounces.

If using Romaine Lettuce:

1. After reciting the *beracha*, *al achilas maror* enough stalks to cover an area of 3 by 5 inches.

MAGGID, TELLING THE STORY OF THE REDEMPTION FROM EGYPT

The *seder* is a time to bring our *yiddishkeit* alive. We do this by rereading and re-enacting the Exodus story. *Seder* participants should discuss all aspects of the Exodus in detail. One should not limit oneself to the text of the Haggadah. Discussion allows a person to re-examine his or her connection with *yiddishkeit* and Hashem. We focus especially on the young children. This might be because the evil Egyptian decrees (such as the killing of newborn boys) were suffered inordinately by innocent children. Children should participate in the *seder* to the extent of their ability. It is important that they nap beforehand so that they (and we) can enjoy the *seder*. In addition to the Four Questions, children should be encouraged to drink the Four Cups, eat the *maror* and *matzah*, and ask questions about Jewish life.

CHAMETZ AFTER PESACH

Chametz that was in a Jew's possession during any part of *Pesach* may not be eaten nor may you derive any benefit from this *chametz* after *Pesach*. Care should be therefore taken when purchasing *chametz* after *Pesach* that this *chametz* should not have been in a Jew's possession during *Pesach*. Many stores have signs saying that they sold their *chametz* and yet they continue doing *chametz* business on *Pesach*. Even if we accept the validity of the sale we may not buy *chametz* there after *Pesach* because of the *Pesach chametz* deliveries.

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A kasheren zissen Pesach
Yehoshua Weber