

Laws of the Seder Night

Eating on Erev Pesach after the Tenth Hour

1. On Erev Pesach after the beginning of the tenth hour of the day, one should be careful not to eat too much because the matzah at the Seder must be eaten with hearty appetite. However, one is permitted to eat light refreshments consisting of fruit, vegetables, fish, meat and eggs provided he does not eat his fill.
2. It is forbidden to drink a small amount of wine after the tenth hour of the day, because a small amount of wine satisfies a person's appetite. According to the letter of law, one is permitted to drink a large amount of wine, because a large amount of wine has the tendency to whet one's appetite. However, the custom is not to drink any wine at all on Erev Pesach.

Kindling Yom Tov Candles:

3. When Erev Pesach falls on Shabbos, women kindle the Yom Tov candles before the Seder, after nightfall. Women who do not daven *maariv* should make certain to say "*Boruch HaMavdil Bein Kodesh L'Kodesh*" after Shabbos before doing a meluchah, lighting the candles and preparing for the Seder.
4. One recites the *bracha (Lehlik Ner Shel Yom Tov)* before kindling the Yom Tov candles, as one does on every Erev Shabbos.

Wine for the Four Cups:

5. Only wine that is valid for Kiddush on Shabbos may be used for the Four Cups at the Seder. Thus, according to the *Rambam*, who holds that Kiddush wine may not contain any honey [or sugar – *Pri Megadim*], one may not use sweetened wine for the Four Cups. The *Ravad*, however, permits sweetened wine. The *Shulchan Aruch* cites both opinions regarding this matter without ruling decisively on the issue. The *Rama*, however, rules leniently and permits using sweetened wine for Kiddush if it is tastier and more appealing than unsweetened wine. There is a similar question as to whether one may use wine that is *mevushal* for Kiddush.

Therefore, as a practical matter, if one has a choice between two equally appealing wines – one unsweetened or naturally sweet, such as Matuk, and the other sugar-sweetened, such as Tokay or Malaga, he should choose the sugar free wine.

Likewise, one should choose a non-*mevushal* (uncooked) wine over a *mevushal* wine if they are equally appealing to him.

Grape Juice:

6. It is permitted to use grape juice or grape must instead of wine for kiddush and the Four Cups, as clearly indicated in the Gemara (*Bava Basra* 97b), which states that a person may squeeze the juice of a cluster of grapes and recite *kiddush* over it. [While some maintain that our grape juice is not valid for kiddush since it does not have the capability of fermenting into wine, this is not so, because as a matter of fact, even our grape juice could be fermented by expert wine makers.] However, one should not recite *kiddush* over reconstituted grape juice from concentrate.
The *Magen Avraham*, however, writes that it is a *mitzvah min haMuvchar* (a superior mitzvah) to recite kiddush over wine which intoxicates, rather than grape juice. The *Shulchan Aruch Harav* implies that the reason grape juice is not as preferable as wine is that it is considered a less significant drink or that it does not gladden the heart as does wine. The *Maharil*, however, writes that his teacher recited *kiddush* over grape juice as he held that there is no advantage to using wine.
7. Although some hold that it is preferable to use wine for kiddush and the Four Cups (as above), one may certainly use grape juice [or grape must] without compunction if wine affects his health or fatigues him, making it difficult for him to properly conduct the Seder. [Although the Gemara says that Rav Yehuda would suffer from headaches from Pesach until Shavuot because of the four cups of wine that he drank at the Seder, this was not because he held that grape juice is not valid for the Four Cups. Rather, the reason Rav Yehudah did not substitute grape juice for wine at the Seder was simply because grape juice was not available to him.]

Red Wine vs. White Wine:

8. Rishonim dispute whether white wine is valid for kiddush. The *Shulchan Aruch* concludes that the accepted custom is to follow the view of the Rambam who permits making kiddush over white wine *l'chatchila* (in the first place). However, in *Hilchos Pesach*, *Shulchan Aruch* writes that there is a mitzvah to try to obtain red wine for the Four Cups. The Taz explains that it is preferable to use red wine on Pesach as a remembrance of the blood of the Jewish children slaughtered by Pharaoh in Egypt. *Shulchan Aruch* concludes, however, that one should use red wine instead of white wine only if the white wine is not more significant than the red wine.
9. One should not mix red wine into his white wine on Yom Tov with the intent of coloring it red, because one may not *intentionally* color his food on Shabbos or Yom Tov.

The Required Volume of the Four Cups:

10. The volume of wine required for Kiddush and the Four Cups is a *reviis*, which is the volume of 1½ eggs. This is approximately 3 oz. or 86 grams [which is the *gematria* of the word כוס]. The *Tzlach* is of the opinion that this volume must be doubled.

Although the earlier *Poskim* do not accept the stringent view of the *Tzlach*. The *Mishnah Berurah* rules that one should conduct himself stringently and use a double volume of wine or matzah for a mitzvah min haTorah (a Biblical mitzvah). With regard to a Rabbinic mitzvah, however, one may conduct himself leniently and use the smaller volume. [Interestingly, the Chafetz Chaim reportedly used a relatively small cup for kiddush (which contained less than 5 oz.), and when asked why, he said that it was because his father used that size cup.] Since the obligation to drink Four Cups at the Seder is a Rabbinic mitzvah, one may be lenient and use a 3 oz. *kos* (cup). The elderly, children, and women may certainly use a 3 oz. cup (*kos*) for the Seder. [When the first night of Pesach falls on Shabbos (i.e., Friday night), there are grounds to be stringent and use a larger cup for Kiddush (i.e., the first of the Four Cups), since the mitzvah to recite *kiddush* on Friday night in *min haTorah* (Biblical).]

Drinking the Entire Cup:

- 11.** Preferably, one should drink the entire cup of wine, even if it is a large cup that contains more than a *reviis* (see previous paragraph). If it is difficult to drink that much, one is *yotzei* (discharges his obligation) as long as he drinks most of a *reviis* (i.e., 2 oz.). Therefore, one should preferably use a small cup (*kos*) that contains only a *reviis*, so that he can drink the entire cup.

Wine Substitute:

- 12.** If one cannot drink wine or grape juice due to illness, or if he does not have any, he may use certain other significant beverages instead for the Four Cups. He may use coffee, tea, or pure orange juice (not from concentrate). The coffee or tea should be warm but not boiling hot, because he must be able to drink it in one gulp. [When these substitute beverages are used, one recites the blessing *shehakol* instead of *borei pri hagefen*.]

She'hecheyanu:

- 13.** When reciting the *she'hecheyanu* blessing during kiddush at the Seder, one should bear in mind that the blessing covers not only the mitzvah of kiddush but all the mitzvos of the night, such as the Four Cups, matzah, *marror*, and *sippur yetzias mitzrayim* (telling the story of the redemption from Egypt). Women who have already recited *she'hecheyanu* when kindling the Yom Tov candles before the Seder should not repeat *she'hecheyanu* during kiddush.

The Mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim:

- 14.** When reading the Haggadah during the Seder, one should describe to his children the story of the Jewish nation's exodus from Egypt in a manner that they can clearly understand and appreciate, for one has an obligation of *והגדת לבנך*, *you shall tell you son [the story of the Exodus]*. This is more important than repeating interesting *divrei Torah* to the family at the Seder.

When the grandfather conducts the family's Seder, the father should still try to fulfill his obligation to tell the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* by personally telling the story to his children. However, if the grandfather tells the story instead of the father, the father has still fulfilled his mitzvah, because the grandfather acts as his *shaliach* (emissary) in performing the mitzvah on the father's behalf.

The Mitzvah of Matzah and Required Amount:

- 15.** One must eat a *kezayis* (olive's volume) of matzah to fulfill the Biblical mitzvah of *בערב תאכלו מצות*, *on the eve [of Pesach] you shall eat matzah*. There are various opinions regarding how to measure a *kezayis*. According to some calculations, a *kezayis* is a quarter hand matzah, while according to others it is half a matzah. [The *Shulchan Aruch* rules that one should eat two *kezaysim* for *מוציא מצה* – one for *HaMotzi* and one for the mitzvah of *matzah*.] As a practical matter, one can fulfill the mitzvah by eating half of a hand matzah.
- 16.** One should eat the matzah with the conscience intent to fulfill the Torah's command to eat matzah on the night of Pesach. If he neglected to have this thought in mind when eating the first *kezayis* of matzah, he should have this thought in mind when eating other matzah at the Seder.
- One must drink the Four Cups and eat the matzah while leaning (*הסיבה*). If one forgot to eat the matzah in a leaning position, he must eat another *kezayis* while leaning. The matzah must be eaten before *chatzos* (midnight, i.e., 1:01 a.m.). If one was delayed until after *chatzos*, he should still eat the matzah, but he should not recite the blessing *על אכילת מצה*.

The Required Time Span for Eating Matzah:

- 17.** To fulfill the mitzvah of matzah, one must swallow the entire *kezayis* of matzah within a certain interval of time called *כדי אכילת פרס* (the time it takes to eat a *peras*, *half loaf of bread*). There are various views on how to calculate this time span. Practically speaking, one should preferably try to finish his *kezayis* of matzah within four minutes. If this is not possible, he should at least make certain to finish the matzah within seven minutes.

Marror:

- 18.** Romaine lettuce is the most preferable type of *marror*. It is very common, however, for this type of lettuce to be infested with bugs. Therefore, one must be very careful to properly wash and clean them of all bugs. [The Gemara explains that even though Romaine lettuce do not have a bitter taste, it is considered a bitter herb because when it remains in the ground for a long period of time, the stalk becomes very bitter. Romaine lettuce is therefore a fitting remembrance for how the Egyptians treated our forefathers in Egypt, in that they initially spoke softly (to seduce the Jews to perform work) and eventually they were very harsh, forcing the Jews to do harsh labor.]

19. The custom is to use a combination of Romaine lettuce and horseradish for the mitzvah of *marror*.

The Required Amount of *Marror*:

20. One must eat a *kezayis* of *marror*, which is 27 grams according to the stringent opinion. If it is difficult to eat that much, one may rely on the lenient view, according to which one must eat only 17 grams or $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce. Practically speaking, if one uses Romaine lettuce, he must eat either one large leaf, or two medium size leaves, or five small leaves. Alternatively, he should eat either two large stalks or four small stalks. One may combine Romaine lettuce with horseradish to complete the required *kezayis*, meaning, he may eat less Romaine lettuce if he also eats some horseradish to complete the required *kezayis*.

The *kezayis* of *marror* should be eaten within the same time span described above (§17) regarding the matzah.

21. The grated horseradish should be kept in a closed container so that it maintains its bitter taste.

Afikomen:

22. The *Shulchan Aruch* rules that the *Afikomen*, which is a remembrance for the *korban pesach*, should be eaten before *chatzos*.

23. On the first night of Pesach One should be vigilant to eat the *Afikomen* before *chatzos*. Some are lenient on the second night of Pesach and do not rush to eat the *Afikomen* before *chatzos*. If possible it is preferable to eat the *Afikomen* before *chatzos* even on the second night. It is reported that in the later years the Rebbe (i.e., after 1988) would eat the *Afikomen* before *chatzos* even on the second night.

24. One must be careful not to eat his fill during the meal to the extent that he is too stuffed to eat the *Afikomen*. If one must force himself to eat the *Afikomen* to the point of disgust, it is not considered a valid form of "eating" and he does not fulfill the mitzvah.

25. The *Afikomen* should be eaten in a leaning position (הסיבה). If one forgot to do so, he need not eat another *kezayis*. [In fact, some maintain that the *Afikomen* need not be eaten in a leaning position.]

Eating After the *Afikomen*:

26. It is forbidden to eat anything after the *Afikomen* because one should retain the taste of the *Afikomen* in his mouth all night long. One should also refrain from drinking anything after the *Afikomen*, except for water. There is a custom to refrain from drinking *anything*, even water.

Hallel:

27. The *Ramo* rules that one should complete the recital of *hallel* before *chatzos*. The custom, however, is to be lenient in this regard and we do not rush to recite *hallel* before *chatzos*.