

Practical Pesach Pointers – 5778/2018

Part 2 – The Pesach Seder

In the previous article, we discussed various aspects relative to preparation for *Pesach*. In this week's article we will focus on various aspects relative to the *Pesach Seder*.

As mentioned in the previous article, *l'chatchilah* (preferably/initially), one should eat only hand-baked *shmurah matzos* for the *Seder*. Some have the custom, however, to use machine matzos for the *Seder*; the *matzos* must then be machine- *shmurah matzos* in order to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *matzah* at the *Seder*.^[1]

It is difficult to give exact measurements for the *k'zayis* of *matzos mitzvah*. One who eats hand *matzah* should eat between a 1/3 and 1/2 of a *matzah* for *achilas matzah* (depending on the size and thickness of the *matzah*) and approximately a 1/4 of a *matzah* for *koreich* (*matzah-maror* sandwich). For *afikoman*, one should try to eat the larger amount; at least, one should eat 1/4 of a *matzah*.

One who eats machine *shmurah matzos* should eat approximately 3/4 of a *matzah* for *achilas matzah* and close to 1/2 of a *matzah* for *koreich*. For *afikoman*, one should try to eat the larger amount; at least, one should eat close to 1/2 a *matzah*.

The *matzah* should be eaten within four minutes, and

preferably within two minutes.^[2] One who has difficulty eating the *matzah* may drink water while chewing.

It is preferable to use red wine for the four *kosos*.^[3] However, one who dislikes red wine may drink white wine (see also note).^[4] Before *Yom Tov*, one may mix white wine with red wine to give it a red color. If one did not mix the wines before *Yom Tov*, the custom is to allow mixing them on *Yom Tov* if one first pours the red wine into the receptacle and then adds the white wine, thereby avoiding a concern of the *melachah*^[5] of *tzove'a* (“coloring”) on *Shabbos* or on *Yom Tov* (see note).^[6]

Since the first *seder* this year is on Friday night, one should be strict in the size of the first *kos*, as it serves also as Friday night *Kiddush*, which is *d'oraysa* (of Biblical origin). According to *Rav Moshe Feinstein*, the *kos* should contain 4.42 ounces of wine (or grape juice; see below);^[7] the other *kosos* (the last three on the first night and all the *kosos* on the second night) which are *d'rabanan* (of Rabbinic origin) need contain only 3.3 ounces. (*L'chatchilah*, the *kos* should be filled to the top.) One should preferably not dilute the wine for the *kosos* with water. Drinking this minimal amount for the four *kosos* should not be a problem for most people.

Some *Poskim* (halachic authorities) note that for the four *kosos*, *l'chatchilah* one should always drink the entire *kos*, regardless of its size.^[8] However, one who has difficulty doing so is not required to drink more than a

majority of each *kos*. One who has difficulty drinking wine may use a cup that contains only 3.3 ounces (but 4.42 ounces for the first *kos* on Friday night) and drink a minimum of 1.7 ounces (but 2.22 ounces for the first *kos* on Friday night); but see note.^[9] (One who drank less than 3.3 ounces for the fourth *kos* should listen to the *birkas* “*al hagefen*” of one who drank the full amount.) Thus, the total wine intake will be only slightly less than 7.5 ounces on the first night and slightly less than 7 ounces on the second night (spread over the span of several hours). Moreover, there are many low alcohol wines available today. One who must dilute the wine should dilute it with grape juice rather than with water. One who has difficulty drinking even a small amount of wine may use grape juice without hesitation. One who cannot drink either wine or grape juice, should consult with one’s *Rav*.

One should begin training children to drink four *kosos* when they reach approximately the age of six.^[10] However, they need not drink more than their cheek-full for each *kos*,^[11] and they may certainly drink grape juice. Younger children should drink a token amount of grape juice.

Although the *maror* is dipped into *charoses*, the *charoses* should be shaken off before eating the *maror*.^[12]

The *hagadah* should be recited with great enthusiasm and joy to experience a feeling of personal redemption from slavery and to instill this enthusiasm and joy into the

children. One should speak to the children about the ten *makkos* and the *geulah* (redemption) from *Mitzrayim* (ancient Egypt). The explanations that the children read from their school notebooks should be used as a springboard for further discussion. The *mitzvah* of *Sipur Y'tzias Mitzrayim*^[13] is from father to child, not child to father.

On the first two nights of *Pesach*, before one goes to sleep, one recites only the first paragraph of *Kri'as Shema*

(but see note)^[14] and *Hamapil*, not the rest of *Kr'ias Shema Al Hamitah* (Bedtime *Shema*).

[1] See *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 460:1 and *Bi'ur Halacha* (ad loc.) s.v. *matzas mitzvah*.

[2] See *S.A. O.C.* 475:6 and note in *Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* 475:43.

[3] Cups of wine at the *Pesach Seder*. *S.A. O.C.* 472:11.

[4] If one has both red wine and white wine and the white wine is superior to the red wine, one may use the white wine (*S.A. ibid.*).

[5] Labor forbidden on *Shabbos/Yom Tov*.

[6] *Sh"ut Sheivet HaLevi* 10:56. However, *Rav Elyashiv* (cited in *Hilchos Shabbos B'Shabbos*, vol.1 page 749, with note 61) rules that pouring red wine into white wine on *Yom Tov* solely for the purpose of creating red wine for the *Seder* is forbidden Biblically. Accordingly, he would likely hold that even pouring white wine into red wine for such purpose would be forbidden. (See also *Mishnah Berurah* 320:56 and 318:65.)

[7] *Kol Dodi Hagadah*, authored by *Rav Dovid Feinstein*.

[8] *Bach O.C.* chapter 472 s.v. *umah shekasav v'ein tzarich*; *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 119:2; *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 472:19.

[9] Since some *Poskim* hold that one must always drink at least the majority of the *kos* – even if the *kosis* larger than 3.3 ounces (see *S.A. O.C.* 472:9), one who wishes to drink only 1.7 ounces should preferably use a *kos* that holds 3.3 ounces. Even the *Mishnah Berurah* (472:33) – who rules in accordance with those *Poskim* who hold that one must drink only 1.7 ounces (according to the calculation of *Rav Moshe Feinstein*) – writes that one should preferably drink the majority of the *kos*. However, one who does not have a small *kos* and cannot drink more than the 1.7 ounces, may be lenient and drink 1.7 ounces. Note: The figures of 1.7 and 2.22 apply to the average person. One whose cheek holds more liquid than the average person should consult one's *Rav*. (See *Bi'ur Halacha* 472:9 s.v. *V'yishte*.)

[10] A father is obligated in the *chinuch* (training) of his young children (under *bar-* and *bas-mitzvah*) to perform *mitzvos* that the children will be obligated to perform when they become older. (Some say a mother is also obligated in *chinuch* of her children; see *Mishnah Berurah* 343:2 and 640:5) In general, the age of *chinuch* is 6-7, depending on the maturity of the child.

[11] *M.B.* 472:47.

[12] *S.A. O.C.* 475:1.

[13] Relating the Exodus from ancient Egypt.

[14] Unless one recited *Shema* at *Ma'ariv* before *tzeis hakochavim* (halachic nightfall), in which case one should recite all three paragraphs of *Shema* before going to sleep.