

## Frequently Asked Questions about Leil HaSeder

### 1) I have difficulty drinking four cups of wine. What should I do?

There are a number of suggestions to try: mixing wine with grape juice,<sup>1</sup> using grape juice,<sup>2</sup> drinking only majority of the cup.<sup>3</sup> If these solutions are not feasible due to a medical condition or other pressing situation, one can listen to the *berachot* from the leader of the Seder and partially fulfill the mitzvah that way.<sup>4</sup>

### 2) What is the proper way to recline?

In order to fulfill the requirement one must lean on one's left side,<sup>5</sup> on a pillow or cushion,<sup>6</sup> and one's head must rest on something.<sup>7</sup> One may lean on the arm rest of a chair, if it is padded.<sup>8</sup> Tilting one's body to the left is not called reclining, and looks kind of silly.

### 3) What happens if I forget to recline?

If one forgot to recline for the first or second cups or for the initial eating of matzah, one must drink/eat again in a reclined position. If one is Ashkenazi and forgot to recline for the third or fourth cups, or for the *afikoman*, there is no need to repeat them.<sup>9</sup> If one is Sefardi, one must repeat.

### 4) Can I use a broken matzah for the middle matzah, since we are going to break it anyway?

Yes, you can use a broken matzah.<sup>10</sup> Some hold that if you have enough whole piece, you should use a whole piece.<sup>11</sup>

### 5) If someone is extremely hungry or thirsty, is it permissible to eat or drink before eating the matzah?

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<sup>1</sup> R. Moshe Feinstein, quoted in *Rivevot Ephraim* 4:113 (32) ruled that one should try hard to drink wine and not grape juice, even if one will feel slightly sick afterwards. R. Moshe Shternbuch, *Teshuvot V'Hanhagot* 2:243, suggests that if one wants to fulfill the opinions that the four cups must have an alcoholic taste, one can mix wine with grape juice to lower the alcohol content.

<sup>2</sup> R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, *Halichot Shlomo*, *Nisan* 9:10, rules that one may use grape juice for the four cups.

<sup>3</sup> *Mishna Berurah* 462:30, notes that while ideally, one should drink the entire cup, and drinking majority is only *b'dieved*, there are situations where it is permissible *l'chatchilah* to drink majority of the cup. The situation that he discusses is one where wine is very expensive. Perhaps this can also be applied to someone who has difficulty drinking wine.

<sup>4</sup> There are Rishonim who are of the opinion that one can fulfill the mitzvah of four cups by listening to the *berachot* of the leader of the Seder. R. Chaim D. HaLevi, *Aseh Lecha Rav* 6:32, writes that one who cannot drink wine for medical reasons may rely on those opinions.

<sup>5</sup> *Mishna Berurah* 472:8.

<sup>6</sup> *Mishna Berurah* 472:7.

<sup>7</sup> *Mishna Berurah* 472:7.

<sup>8</sup> R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, cited in R. Yehuda Tzarum's *Imrei Shefer* pg. 41.

<sup>9</sup> *Shulchan Aruch* and Rama, *Orach Chaim* 472:7 and *Mishna Berurah* 472:22.

<sup>10</sup> Rama, *Orach Chaim* 475:7, writes that if one of the matzahs broke, one should use it for the middle matzah which is going to be broken anyway. Rama doesn't mention any requirement *l'chatchilah* to use a whole piece for the middle matzah.

<sup>11</sup> *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 458:12, writes that ideally one should have three whole matzahs, but there is no obligation to bake extra if one broke. The implication is that if one has extra matzah available, one should use a whole matzah for the middle matzah. *Kaf HaChaim* 475:83, writes that in his community, a fourth matzah was baked as a backup in case one of the initial three broke.

It is permissible to drink non-alcoholic drinks between the first and second cups.<sup>12</sup> According to some, that is limited to water.<sup>13</sup> If one is not feeling well, one may drink or eat a small amount of food that doesn't contain matzah products.<sup>14</sup>

**6) There is a wide age-range of children at our Seder and if we want the younger children to participate in eating the matzah and maror, we would have to rush the Seder and compromise on Maggid for the older children. What should we do?**

There are two options presented by *Mishna Berurah*: a) You can have the children go at different paces so that the younger children reach matzah and maror earlier; b) You can go quickly through Maggid and then have a more in-depth discussion during the meal.<sup>15</sup>

**7) How much matzah must I eat over the course of the Seder?**

Ideally, one should eat five *k'zayits* of matzah: two for the initial mitzvah,<sup>16</sup> one for korech and two for afikoman.<sup>17</sup> While it is difficult to give an exact amount, for the average hand matzah, a *k'zayit* is 1/4 of the matzah and for the average machine matzah, a *k'zayit* is 1/3 of the matzah.<sup>18</sup> If someone has real (not perceived) difficulty eating matzah, they can eat one *k'zayit* for the initial mitzvah, one for korech and one for afikoman.<sup>19</sup>

**8) If someone has difficulty eating matzah, is it permissible to spread on margarine or dip it in water in order to be able to fulfill the mitzvah?**

One may dip or soak the matzah in water, but not in other liquids. If one is ill, one may dip them in other liquids.<sup>20</sup> One may not spread margarine on the matzah.<sup>21</sup>

**9) What is the preferred vegetable to use for maror?**

Romaine lettuce is the preferred vegetable for maror, even though our romaine lettuce is not bitter.<sup>22</sup>

**10) What is one supposed to do with the charoset?**

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<sup>12</sup> *Mishna Berurah* 473:16.

<sup>13</sup> *Aruch HaShulchan* 473:7.

<sup>14</sup> *Piskei Teshuvot* 473, note 50.

<sup>15</sup> *Shaar HaTziyun* 472:2.

<sup>16</sup> *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 475:1. One for Motzi Matzah and one for HaMotzi

<sup>17</sup> *Mishna Berurah* 477:1. One to remember the korban Pesach and one to remember the korban chagigah.

<sup>18</sup> These shiurim are based on the calculations of R. Shimon Eider, *Halachos of Pesach* Vol. II pp. 242-243. He notes that while *Mishna Berurah* 481:1 recommends following the stringency of R. Yechezkel Landau- that the *k'zayit* is double the size of a normal olive- for mitzvot of biblical origin, this is not practically relevant for someone who is anyway eating the five recommended *k'zayits*. This is because the recommendation to eat a separate *k'zayit* for Motzi Matzah and for HaMotzi as well as a separate *k'zayit* for korban Pesach and korban chagigah is only rabbinic in nature and there is no obligation to use the double-size *k'zayit* for those aspects. As such, eating two *k'zayits* of the smaller size fulfills both aspects.

<sup>19</sup> R. Shimon Eider, *Halachos of Pesach* Vol. II pg. 244.

<sup>20</sup> *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 461:4 and *Mishna Berurah* 461:17.

<sup>21</sup> R. Yisrael Harfenes, *Mekadesh Yisrael* no. 396, questions whether spreading margarine is similar to soaking matzah in oil, which would invalidate it for the mitzvah or whether it is similar to eating matzah while drinking something, which would not invalidate it.

<sup>22</sup> *Mishna Berurah* 473:34, writes that we don't know the identity of all of the vegetables that qualify for maror, but we assume that *chazeret* is romaine lettuce and *tamcha* is horseradish. Since *chazeret* is first on the list, it would be the first choice. Furthermore, it is difficult for many people to eat a *k'zayit* of horseradish. While *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chaim* 473:30 and many other poskim (cited in *Piskei Teshuvot* 473:17) rule that romaine lettuce is valid even though it wasn't left in the ground long enough to become bitter, *Chazon Ish, Orach Chaim* no. 124 to *Pesachim* 39a, rules that it is only valid if it is actually bitter. Being that bitter romaine lettuce is not readily available in the marketplace, according to *Chazon Ish*, horseradish would be the preferred choice.

One is supposed to dip the maror in the charoset and then shake it off before eating the maror. One should not eat the charoset together with the maror.<sup>23</sup> There are differing traditions regarding whether one should dip the maror of korech into charoset.<sup>24</sup> If one does dip, one should also shake of the charoset before eating korech.<sup>25</sup>

**11) What is one supposed to do with the shank bone and egg?**

One should not eat the shank-bone on the night of the Seder. One should try to eat the egg, but it is not obligatory.<sup>26</sup>

**12) I know that there is a *minhag* to refrain from roasted meat at the Seder meal. How do we define “roasted” for these purposes?**

Any meat that is baked or roasted in the oven or in a pan without liquid is considered roasted.<sup>27</sup> Fried meat may<sup>28</sup> or may not<sup>29</sup> be considered roasted.

**13) I would like to begin my Seder at one home and then finish at a different home. What point in the Seder is the best time to switch?**

You cannot switch from the beginning of Kiddush until eating the matzah.<sup>30</sup> You can technically switch in the middle of the meal, before the beginning of the afikoman. However, traditionally, we do not switch places until the end of *Birkat HaMazon*.<sup>31</sup> You may switch places for Hallel and the fourth cup.<sup>32</sup> It is preferable not to switch places until after the fourth cup.<sup>33</sup>

**14) What must be finished by halachic midnight?**

Ideally, one should complete Hallel before midnight, but at the very least, one should eat the afikoman before midnight.<sup>34</sup>

**15) In what situations may one eat or drink after the Seder?**

One may drink water after the Seder.<sup>35</sup> If someone is in a situation that requires him to stay up the whole night after the seder (e.g. a physician), it is permissible to eat after halachic midnight.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 475:1.

<sup>24</sup> *Shulchan Aruch* and Rama, *Orach Chaim* 475:1.

<sup>25</sup> *Mishna Berurah* 475:17.

<sup>26</sup> *Mishna Berurah* 476:11.

<sup>27</sup> *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 476:1 and *Mishna Berurah* 476:1.

<sup>28</sup> *Teshuvot Pnei Meivin*, cited in *Piskei Teshuvot* 476, note 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Siddur Pesach K'Hilchato* cited in *Piskei Teshuvot* 476, note 3.

<sup>30</sup> Because of the requirement of *kiddush b'Makom seudah*, eating a meal in the same place as kiddush.

<sup>31</sup> *Mishna Berurah* 479:9, writes that there is no halachic issue switching places in the middle of the meal. The only halachic issues are switching before eating matzah or once the afikoman begins through *Birkat HaMazon*. [There is a prohibition against eating the afikoman in two places and if one finishes the meal in one place, one cannot recite *Birkat HaMazon* elsewhere.] However, *Mishna Berurah* notes that common practice is to refrain from switching places in the middle of the meal.

<sup>32</sup> Rama, *Orach Chaim* 480:1 and *Mishna Berurah* 480:11.

<sup>33</sup> *Teshuvot V'Hanhagot* 4:101, out of concern for the opinion of Ra'avad who requires one to drink all four cups in the same place.

<sup>34</sup> *Shulchan Aruch* and Rama, *Orach Chaim* 677:1, *Mishna Berurah* 677:7 and *Sha'ar HaTziyun* 677:6.

<sup>35</sup> *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 481:1 and *Mishna Berurah* 481:1. *Mishna Berurah* permits non-alcoholic beverages that don't have a strong taste. It is unclear whether soda is included in this category.

<sup>36</sup> *Halichot Shlomo, Nissan* 9:58.