

Select Laws of Pesah- By Rabbi Joseph Dweck

Select Laws of Koshering for Pesah

1. Vessels used for Hametz (leaven) are forbidden to use on Pesah without koshering them. This is so from the time Hametz becomes forbidden on the eve of Pesah and onwards.
2. The method used to kosher vessels and utensils for Pesah depends on their general use throughout the year. Although some vessels simply cannot be koshered, the main rule is: Just as a vessel absorbs Hametz, so it discharges it. In descending order, the methods used for koshering vessels are as follows:
 - a. Vessels which absorb dry Hametz (such as baking pans) must be heated red hot in an oven or with a blow torch until they give off sparks. If they cannot withstand such heat, and would be ruined, they may not be used for Pesah.
 - b. First degree vessels (vessels placed on the fire to cook liquids) must be immersed in boiling water in a large first-degree vessel.
 - c. Second degree vessels (vessels in which hot food is placed after having been cooked) must either have boiling water poured over them from a first-degree vessel, or be immersed in hot water in a second-degree vessel (depending on their use throughout the year).
 - d. Vessels used with cold foods require washing and rinsing with cold water.
 - e. Glass vessels require thorough washing and rinsing.
3. Pots used to cook with liquid on a fire require immersion in boiling water. Prior to this they must be cleaned thoroughly, inside and out, of all crusted-on food and rust. Pressure cookers also require immersion. This includes the rubber under the lip of the cover. Pouring boiling water from a first-degree vessel is not sufficient.
4. Frying pans used with oil must be immersed in boiling water and do not require purging by fire. However frying pans which are used without any oil whatsoever, and which cannot be purged in fire, may not be used on Pesah. New pans must be purchased instead. (A frying pan in which something unkosher was fried requires purging with fire until red hot. If liver was fried in it, one may be lenient by purging it in boiling water, on the condition that it is first left unused for twenty-four hours.)
5. Plates and bowls ordinarily used as second-degree vessels (vessels never placed on a fire) may be purged by immersion in a first-degree vessel or by pouring boiling water over them from a first-degree vessel. Immersion in a second-degree vessel, however, is generally sufficient.
6. Metal plates and utensils used as or with second degree vessels may be koshered by immersion in a first-degree vessel or by pouring water over them from a first-degree vessel. Immersion in a second-degree vessel however is sufficient.

7. All vessels generally used for cold foods and liquids, such as cups made of metals (like silver or gold), or earthenware or plastic, are koshered by washing and rinsing them well. This applies even if they were used on rare occasions for Hametz heated to boiling. If they were used for Hametz heated to boiling within the previous twenty-four-hour period, one should be stringent and kosher them by cleaning them thoroughly and immersing them in boiling water.
8. Refrigerators and freezers may be koshered for Pesah by thorough cleaning with soap and water.
9. Earthenware or chinaware used with hot food or drink during the year cannot be koshered. These vessels should be stored away and not used on Pesah.
10. According to the Shulhan Aruch glass does not absorb Hametz, and therefore does not require any koshering for Pesah. Even if some liquid Hametz, such as beer, remained in a glass bottle for more than twenty-four hours, it can be koshered by washing it well. Ashkenazic authorities treat glass as earthenware, maintaining that it cannot be koshered. There are Sepharadim as well, living outside of Israel, who are stringent in this case. If they wish, they may follow the opinion of the Shulhan Aruch when in Israel. A dissolution of vows for their prior stringency is recommended.
11. Sinks used for washing pots and dishes, even if made from porcelain, are koshered by thorough cleaning and pouring boiling water over them. Some are stringent and cover the sink with heavy grade aluminum foil or the like. This is only a stringency.
12. Vessels made from wood, stone or bone have a status of metal and are koshered by immersion in boiling water, or by pouring boiling water on them from a first- or second-degree vessel, depending on how they are used throughout the year. Plastic is also koshered in this manner.
13. Pyrex and Duralex vessels can be koshered by washing and rinsing. Ashkenazim can be lenient and kosher them by immersing them in boiling water three times without putting them in cold water afterwards (lest they crack). Sepharadim who followed this stringency may revert to the lenient method without a dissolution of vows.

Select Laws of the Seder

Kadesh – Recite Kiddush

1. The Seder should begin only after the stars come out, so that the Mitzvah of the four cups can be done after nightfall. However, one who added from the weekday to the Holiday by praying early and reciting Kiddush before the stars came out, has fulfilled his obligation post factum. In any case, if the Karpas was dipped in salt water before nightfall, it is proper to be stringent and dip again after it becomes dark. This rule applies even more so with regard to eating the Matzot and reading the Haggadah. If these Mitzvot were performed before dark, they should be repeated after dark, without a blessing, for whenever there is a doubt concerning the obligation to say a blessing, we are lenient and waive the obligation.

2. All participants in the Seder must hear Kiddush. Both the one reciting the Kiddush as well as those hearing it must have in mind to fulfil the obligation of Kiddush. The words, Baruch Hu U'Baruch Shemo, are not said. Only Amen is answered.
3. Kiddush is said while standing. The order of the Kiddush is as follows: the blessing of Boreh Peri HaGefen, the blessing of Asher Bahar Banu, Mekadesh Yisrael VeHaZemanim, and then the blessing of Shehehiyanu. When Pesah begins on Motzaei Shabbat (Saturday night), Kiddush is said in the following order: the blessing on the wine, the blessing Asher Bahar Banu, the blessing Boreh MeOrey HaEsh (said on the Havdalah flame), the blessing of Havdalah, and last the blessing of Shehehiyanu. When it falls on Friday night, we begin with the words Yom HaShishi Vayechulu HaShamayim etc.
4. After reciting the Kiddush, the wine is drunk while reclining.

Urhatz – Washing the Hands

1. One must wash one's hands without a blessing before dipping the Karpas (in vinegar, salt water or lemon water) and eating it. The reason for this washing is that when one eats any wet vegetable, he must first wash his hands. Being that there is a dispute among the authorities whether there is a blessing said after this washing or not, the law is not to say it, for when there is a doubt concerning the obligation to say a blessing, we are lenient.

Karpas

1. Less than an ounce of Karpas is taken and dipped in vinegar, salt water or lemon water. The blessing Boreh Peri HaAdamah is said as mentioned above, when the blessing is said, one must have in mind that the blessing exempts the Maror eaten later in the Seder.
2. If Karpas (celery or parsley) is not found, another green vegetable is used. Celery is always preferable.
3. One is not required to recline while eating the Karpas. If one wishes to do so, he may.

Yahatz – Dividing the Matzah

1. From the three Matzot placed on top of the Seder plate, the host takes the middle Matzah and divides it in two. The bigger piece is saved for the Afikoman, and the smaller piece is placed back in between the other two whole Matzot. The piece of the Afikoman is placed in a napkin, in commemoration of that which is written, "Their leftover dough was wrapped in their clothes (and placed) on their shoulders. The Children of Israel did as Moses had said" (Exodus 12:34-35).

Magid – Relating the Story of the Exodus

1. It is a positive commandment to relate the story of the Exodus from Egypt on the first night of Pesah (first two nights outside of Israel). It is thus written "Remember this day as the time you left Egypt" (Exodus 13:3).

2. The Torah obligates women in the Mitzvah to relate the story of the Exodus on Pesah night. Their obligation is equal to the men's. Women can therefore exempt men from their obligation as men can for them.
3. Before beginning Magid, the Seder plate is lifted with the Matzot on it, and Ha Laham 'Aniya is said. After this, the plate is taken away from the table, as if everyone has finished eating. This is done so that the children will see this as strange, and ask about it. It is then told to them that we are not permitted to eat until we tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt.
4. After Mah Nishtanah, the Seder plate is replaced on the table and 'Avadim Hayinu is said. This part of the Haggadah may be recited either sitting or standing. There is a difference of opinion as to whether or not one may recline while reciting the Haggadah. One who wishes to follow the authorities who permit reclining may do so.

Motsi - Matsa

1. It is a mitzvah from the Torah to eat a piece of matzah the volume of a large olive (approximately one ounce or 28 grams) on the first night of Pesah (first two nights outside of Israel).
2. The matzot are lifted up as they are, with the broken one in the middle, and the blessing of Hamotsi is said. The bottom matzah is then placed on the table, leaving the top matzah and the middle broken matzah in hand. The blessing "*al akhilat matzah*" is said. One ounce from the top matzah and one ounce from the middle matzah. Both pieces are dipped in salt and eaten while reclining.
3. Some authorities are lenient and maintain that the volume of a large olive is three quarters of an ounce (19 grams). If one is sick or elderly and eating one full ounce is difficult, the lenient opinion can be followed.
4. One must recline to the left when eating the matzah. If one forgot to recline it must be eaten again while reclining.
5. An elderly or ill individual may soak the matzah in water to soften it in order to ease eating it.

Maror – Bitter Herbs

1. During times when the Bet HaMikdash (Holy Temple) is standing, the Torah obligates us to eat Maror (bitter herbs) with the Korban Pesah (Passover offering), as it is written: "On this night, you shall eat the meat (of the Korban Pesah) roasted by fire, together with Matzah and Maror" (Exodus 12:8). Now, although the Temple is no longer standing, and the Korban Pesah is temporarily discontinued, we are still obligated by Rabbinical decree to continue eating an ounce (28.8 grams) of Maror on Pesah night. Before eating the Maror, it is proper to have in mind that we are doing so in order to fulfil this Rabbinical decree.

The Order of Eating Maror

1. Immediately after finishing the first ounce of Matzah, the same amount (28.8 grams) of Maror is taken and dipped in the Haroset. In order not to dull the sharpness of the Maror, it is customary to dip only a small portion of the Maror in the Haroset. For the same reason, the Maror should not remain in the Haroset for too long. Finally, the Haroset is to be shaken off after dipping. The blessing 'Al Achilat Maror is then said, and the full quantity of Maror is to be eaten within seven and a half minutes. If one ate the Maror without dipping it in Haroset, another ounce must be eaten again with Haroset.
2. Since Maror is eaten to remind us of how the Egyptians embittered the lives of our people with slavery, the Maror is eaten without reclining.

Korech – Matzah and Maror Combined

1. Immediately after eating an ounce of Maror, the same amount (28.8 grams) of the third Matzah which was placed on the Seder plate after HaMotzi is taken and made into a sandwich with an additional ounce of Maror. The tip of the sandwich is dipped into the Haroset while saying Zecher LeMikdash KeHillel (in memory of the Temple, according to Hillel), and then eaten while reclining to the left. The reason for eating the sandwich is this: It is written in the Torah, "It (the Korban Pesah) shall be eaten with Matzah and Maror" (Numbers 9:11). According to Hillel the Elder, the Matzah and Maror had to be eaten together. (When the Temple stood, they were eaten together with the Korban Pesah as well.) The sages, however, disagreed with Hillel and were of the opinion that Matzah and Maror were to be eaten separately. The Talmud (Pesachim 115a) rules that since the law was never decided between Hillel and sages, we say the blessing 'Al Achilat Matzah on the Matzah alone and eat it, and then 'Al Achilat Maror on the bitter herb alone and eat it. Only then do we place them together and eat them without a blessing, in memory of the Temple, according to Hillel.
2. The Haroset need not be shaken off the Korech sandwich before eating it. Furthermore, if one ate it without dipping it in the Haroset first, the obligation is fulfilled, and the sandwich does not have to be eaten again.
3. Karpas (celery or parsley) as well as other vegetables should not be added to the Korech sandwich.

Shulhan Orech – Setting the Table

1. The table is set for the meal, which is to be eaten with true Holiday celebration and joy. One who wishes to eat while reclining is praised. This is not required by law.
2. Two cooked foods are eaten at the meal; one in memory of the Korban Pesah (Passover Offering) and one in memory of the Korban Hagigah (Festival Offering). It is customary to eat the egg on the Seder plate and say Zecher LeKorban Hagigah (In memory of the Festival Offering). It is preferable to eat meat at the meal to celebrate the joy of the Holiday. According to the law, the obligation of eating two cooked foods is fulfilled even with cooked vegetables and rice.

Tzafun – The Afikoman

1. After the meal is finished, the piece of the middle Matzah which was wrapped in a cloth and hidden is taken for the Afikoman. It is to be eaten while reclining, and finished within seven and a half minutes. Before eating the Afikoman, some have the custom of saying Zecher LeKorban Pesah Ha Ne'echal 'Al HaSova (In memory of the Passover offering eaten on a full stomach). Preferably, two ounces (57.6 grams) of Matzah should be eaten, one in memory of the Korban Pesah, and one in memory of the Matzah eaten with it. According to the law, however, one fulfils the obligation with one ounce (28.8 grams). The Afikoman is eaten alone, and should not be dipped in Haroset or the like.
2. Ideally, the Afikoman should be finished before midnight. If it was not, it may be eaten afterwards post factum.
3. No food may be eaten after eating the Afikoman, so that the flavor of the Matzah will remain in one's mouth. If one mistakenly ate fruit and the like after the Afikoman, as long as the Birkat HaMazon was not yet said, the Afikoman is eaten again. Once Birkat HaMazon was said, however, it is not necessary to eat another piece.
4. Although eating is forbidden after the Afikoman, drinking tea or coffee is permitted, even with sugar. This is certainly so if, as a result, one will stay awake longer and continue relating the story of the Exodus. Water and soft drinks are also permitted after the Seder. No wine is permitted after the fourth cup.

Barech – Grace After Meals

1. After eating the Afikoman, Birkat HaMazon (Grace After Meals) is recited over the third cup of wine.
2. There is no reclining during the Birkat HaMazon.
3. Ya'aleh VeYavo is said in the Birkat HaMazon. When Pesah night falls on Shabbat, Retzeh VeHahalitzenu is said before Ya'aleh VeYavo.
4. After the Birkat HaMazon, the blessing Boreh Peri HaGefen is said on the third cup (having in mind to exempt the fourth cup as well), and it is drunk while reclining. If one did not recline, it must be drunk again while reclining, without the blessing of HaGefen. No other wine may be drunk between the third and the fourth cup.

Hallel – Praise

1. The fourth cup of wine is poured and the remainder of the Hallel (Psalms 115-118) is completed with joy and fervor. It is begun with Shefoch Hamat'ha (Psalms 79:6-7) while holding the cup of wine in hand. If one cannot hold the cup in hand for the entire Hallel, he may place it in front of him on the table.

2. After completing the regular Hallel, we continue with the twenty-six verses of Hallel HaGadol (Psalm 136), Nishmat Kol Hai, and Yishtabah. Instead of completing Yishtabah with its own blessing, however, we conclude with Yahallelucha, the closing blessing of the Hallel, which ends “Blessed are You ... O King, praised in prayer”.
3. After finishing the last blessing, we drink the fourth cup while reclining. Boreh Peri HaGefen is not said on the fourth cup. If one did not recline for the fourth cup, as long as there is still wine left in the cup, it is refilled and drunk again while reclining without a blessing. If there is no wine left in the cup, another cup is poured and it is drunk with a blessing. The blessing is said in this case because one did not originally have in mind to drink again after the fourth cup.

Nirtzah – Acceptance (End of Seder)

1. It is a Mitzvah to continue telling the story of the Exodus even after the Seder.
2. Outside of Israel, the entire Seder is repeated the second night. All laws brought concerning the first night apply equally to the second night.