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(Based on the responsa of **HaRav Chaim P. Scheinberg**, *shlita*, Rosh Yeshiva Torah Ore to questions posed by women attending his regular chizuk talks. (Footnotes to the original in Hebrew have been omitted. Call Anshe Emes for copies.)

In former times, wealthy people who had large houses also had many servants who did their every bidding, while poor people, who could not afford servants, lived in small homes with one or two rooms.

Understandably, the pre-Pesach chores of the rich were performed by the servants, while the poor, who had only their one or two rooms to clean, a few pieces of furniture a minimum of utensils, and some clothing, took care of their needs themselves. In those days, the cleaning was hard. Tables were made of raw wood, requiring them to be scrubbed or even to be shaven to ensure that no pieces of food were hidden in the cracks. Earthen or wooden floors also needed to be thoroughly scrubbed and cleaned.

Today, we seem to be caught in a trap. The average modern home is larger than formerly. Furniture, utensils and clothing are much more plentiful. The average home today could compare with the more affluent homes of previous generations. However, we do not have the servants that they had, so that today, all the chores fall on the housewife. At the same time, she still feels obligated to clean and scrub as they did formerly, even though she has laminated furniture and tiled floors, making this type of cleaning unnecessary.

As a result of this, the pressure of pre-Pesach cleaning has reached unnecessary and overwhelming levels. The housewife often becomes a nervous wreck, unable to enjoy the Simchas Yom Tov of Pesach and unable to perform the mitzvos and obligations of the Seder night.



Every woman must enjoy Pesach. This is an obligation clearly defined in the Torah as explained by Chazal. She must look forward to it and not dread it like a Tisha B'Av. Every woman and follow the Hagadah with the rest of the family. Clearly, the performance of her pre-Pesach duties must be balanced against her Pesach obligations.

Pre-Pesach cleaning is required to avoid the danger of transgressing any Torah or Rabbinic prohibition of having chometz in the house on Pesach. It is evident from the responsa of the Rosh HaYeshiva, shlita, that this need not be excessive.

It is not the intention here to abolish Minhagim which have been passed down by Klal Yisroel from generation to generation. Nevertheless, some practices adopted by women in the Pesach cleaning today are not an actual continuation of the old Minhagim. For example, if a person does not sell his chometz, of course it is necessary to check his utensils and to wash off any chometz left on them, or render the chometz inedible. But if the chometz is sold, then scrubbing the pots, pans and dishes which are going to be locked away is not necessary. One might be tempted to insist on doing the extra work anyway -- to be machmir (stringent). However, in these stringencies lie the grave danger of causing many laxities and brushing aside many mitzvohs completely -- the Torah and Rabbinic obligations which women are required to do on Pesach and particularly during the Seder.

Many people like to do more “cleaning” than the bare minimum to such an extent that some even incorporate their general “spring cleaning” into their required pre-Pesach chores. These extra exertions should not prevent her from fulfilling her obligations on Pesach, and particularly on the Seder night.

## GENERAL PESACH CLEANING NOTES:

- A. All property and possessions must be cleaned and checked to make sure that they are free of all chometz, except in the following cases:
- B. If, during the year, chometz is not brought into a place, [then] that place does not have to be cleaned out or checked for chometz.
- C. Any article which is not used on Pesach, [and] which is closed up and sold, need not be checked for chometz.
- D. Crumbs which have been rendered inedible by being completely soaked in a foul-tasting liquid, such as detergent (detergent is defined as a substance which spoils the chometz and renders it inedible.), bleach or ammonia, are not considered chometz, because they are not fit to be eaten by an animal.
- E. The general obligation to check for and destroy crumbs does not apply if the crumbs are less than the size of an olive (kezayis) and are dirty enough to prevent a person from eating them.

### PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

1. **FLOORS:** In our times we don't have earthen floors with deep cracks in them. It is sufficient for tiled or covered floors to be swept and rinsed well with a detergent. The small cracks do not have to be checked if the detergent reaches into them.

2. **FOOD CABINETS:** (If the cabinet is not going to be used on Pesach, see General Notes C & B above.) If the cabinet is going to be used on Pesach, take out all the food and wash it around with a rag soaked in detergent. Be sure the detergent goes into all the cracks and soaks into any crumbs that might be there. However, afterwards, the cabinets are usually lined.
3. **REFRIGERATOR:** Take the food out, and wipe with a rag soaked in a detergent. Some people cover the racks.
4. **CLOTHING CLOSETS:** If there is some significant possibility that chometz went into them, they should be checked for fully edible crumbs of chometz, besides regular, large edible chometz foods. If the probability that chometz entered these places is remote, a Rav can be consulted to clarify' the conditions under which they do not have to be checked. This includes chests, dressers, basements, and all other similar cases. (See also General Note B.)
5. **KASHERING SINKS:** Clean the sinks, and pour a kettle of boiling water into them and on their sides. Some people pour hot water mixed with bleach down the drain. The usual practice today is to line the sinks (e.g., tin foil, contact paper) or to use an insert. If [this is] not difficult, this should be followed.
6. **TABLETOPS:** Wash them with a detergent. However, afterwards, they are usually covered.
7. **MARBLE COUNTERS:** If they were used for hot chometz, they should be cleaned well and boiling hot water poured on them, or completely covered so that nothing Pesach'dik touches them. Some people do both.
8. **FAUCETS (TAPS):** Cleaning, without any other kashering procedure, is sufficient.
9. **KASHERING RANGE/OVEN/STOVE TOP:** Wipe [the stove top] with a rag soaked in detergent and cover it with tin foil if you wish. Old grates can be kashered by lighting all the burners, raising them to their maximum heat, and putting on a blech while the burners are on. This spreads the heat over the whole top and intensifies the heat on the grates. Let it burn for 5-10 minutes.

**OVEN:**

- a) Wipe it with a rag soaked in detergent which spoils any particle of edible chometz. If you suspect that there are crumbs or particles of chometz left over which are inaccessible, then clean the oven with any of the regular oven-cleaners (e.g. Easy-Off). Then heat the inside of the oven by turning the oven on to its highest temperature for about one hour. (On electric ovens it should be determined whether the highest temperature is on roasting or broil [or] grill.) However, if a closed oven insert for baking and roasting were available, this would be preferable. In this case, only wiping and cleaning are necessary.
- b) Do not use the chometz'dik oven racks for Pesach. If this is too difficult, then one can kasher the racks with the same procedure as for the oven.
- c) Chometz'dik baking and roasting pans should not be used for Pesach.

10. **FOOD PROCESSOR/MIXER:** A Rav should be consulted.
11. **POTS, PANS, DISHES & SILVERWARE (CUTLERY):** Whatever is not going to be used for Pesach should be put away and locked up. If there is actual chometz, it should also be sold. If you do not sell chometz, wash or soak them in a detergent [before putting away], it is not necessary to shine them.

12. **DISH TOWELS:** If one does not have a Pesach'dik set of dish towels, then one's regular dishtowels may be used if they are washed with a detergent.
13. **PESACH TABLECLOTHS:** These can be ironed with the same iron as is used during the rest of the year.
14. **CLOTHES, BLANKETS, ETC:** If they have been washed in a detergent, then there is no need to worry, even if you find crumbs in them on Pesach. Pockets of clothes not being washed or dry-cleaned need only to be checked for chometz by brushing them out. However, if there is a possibility of crumbs between the stitches or in a hidden crevice that cannot be shaken out, then the pockets must be wiped with a wet rag soaked in detergent. Of course, clothes that will not be worn on Pesach can be put away without being checked if all the actual chometz in them is sold.
15. **SIDDURIM, BENCHERS, SEFORIM & BOOKS:** If there is a chance that they contain chometz crumbs, then they should either be put away with other chometz utensils, or cleaned and checked well.
16. **TOYS:** If there is edible chometz, then it should be removed; if it cannot be removed, it should be made inedible (see General Notes D & B.) There is no need to scrub them.
17. **TECHINA & OTHER KITNIYUS:** May be used after the house has been cleaned for Pesach. They should not be cooked in utensils that will be used on Pesach, and certainly not on Pesach itself (according to our Minhag Ashkenaz).
18. **CHECKING THE ROOMS:** If it is too difficult to check all the rooms on one night, then the work may be divided and done, according to the Laws of Bedikas Chometz, at other times. No chometz should be left in any room that has been cleaned and checked properly. The brocho may never be recited before the night of the 14th. Therefore, at least one place where chometz was left should be left unchecked in order to fulfill the mitzvah of Bedikas Chometz on that night. But if the whole house has been cleaned completely, then somebody else should hide 10 pieces of chometz (according to the Minhag) so that a proper bedikah is made.
19. **FOOD THAT FALLS:** onto a chair or onto the floor on Pesach should be washed off for hygienic reasons. The food does not become chometz even if the food is hot.
20. **LAST MINUTE PREPARATIONS:** For example, setting the table, making the beds, etc., should be completed early enough in the day so that you will be able to rest a little bit. Be ready to start the Seder immediately after Maariv to ensure that the children won't fall asleep at the Seder.
21. **ENJOY PESACH!** Try to make the Pesach chores easy for yourself Don't do unnecessary hard work. Don't do unnecessary cleaning. You can be like a Queen and you must enjoy your Pesach!

# BASIC LAWS OF THE SEDER

Some women have a habit of taking a bite of matzoh, then running back and forth to the kitchen, taking a few more bites in between. In this way, it takes them too long to eat the matzoh, and they do not fulfill the mitzvah properly. The same is true about the wine, maror, korech and afikomen. Therefore, do not leave the table until you have finished eating the required amount. Sit like a Queen! Relax and be calm while eating and drinking the matzoh and wine within the time limit. The cooking can be checked after completing the mitzvohs. Remember... these are mitzvohs that can be done only once a year, so enjoy them and enjoy the whole Seder.

There are many laws about which there exist numerous opinions. It is beyond the scope of this pamphlet to encompass all of the laws according to all of the opinions.

## **MITZVOHS RELATED TO EATING MATZOHS AND MAROR:**

The size of a "kezayis" is a measurement in volume equal to the volume of half an egg.

There is a difference of opinion if our eggs are smaller than those at the time of the Talmud. According to the Chazon Ish zt"l, the size of a kezayis d'oraisa is 45-50 cc, and according to Hagaon Harav A. Chaim No'eh zt"l, it is 25.6 - 28.8 cc. The Steipler zt"l wrote in Shiurim Shel Torah that the volume of a kezayis d'oraisa is approximately 2/3 of the volume of a machine matzoh. According the Mishna Berurah, when we are dealing with a Mitzvah d'oraisa, we should take the larger shiur (size), and when dealing with a Mitzvah d'rabbanon, it is sufficient to rely on the smaller shiur.

It is very hard to give an exact standard shiur for the amount of hand matzoh that one has to eat for kezayis d'oraisa and kezayis d'rabbanon and a Rav should be consulted. However, one can rely on the fact that by filling up one's mouth with as much matzoh as possible (1) breaking them into small pieces), leaving enough room for chewing afterwards in the normal way, one will have definitely eaten a kezayis d'oraisa.

It should be noted that hand matzoh should be used for both kezayis d'oraisa and kezayis d'rabbanon, or consult a Rav.

1. Korech requires a kezayis d'rabbanon of matzoh and a kezayis d'rabbanon of maror.
2. For Afikomen, it would be advisable if possible to eat 2 kezaysim.
3. Elderly people, or those unable to meet these requirements, should consult a Rav.

## **TIME LIMIT**

1. The kezayis d'oraisa of Matzoh should be eaten within two minutes.
2. Five to six minutes is acceptable.
3. Under exceptional circumstances, nine minutes is also acceptable.
4. If one encounters difficulty, a small amount of water may be sipped while chewing.
5. Relax, chew well and then begin swallowing. The time limit begins from the first swallowing and continues until the entire kezayis has been swallowed.

## **THE FOUR CUPS -- WHAT TO DRINK**

1. Wine is preferable. To avoid drowsiness:
  - a) use a cup that does not exceed the minimum shiur (size).
  - b) One may drink a glass of water immediately after swallowing the wine. (The water should be on the table at the time that one says the Brocho of Borei Pri Hagafen.)
2. If one cannot drink wine, he may use grape juice.
3. Those allergic to wine and to grape juice may use a "chamar medina" (for example, tea and coffee).

## **SIZE**

1. The cup must contain at least a re'veis. Being that there are various opinions on the size of a re'veis, a Rav should be consulted.
2. Preferably, one should drink the entire cup.
3. If this is very difficult, then drinking most of the cup is sufficient.
4. Under exceptional conditions, drinking most of a re'veis is also acceptable, even if the cup is much larger than a re'veis.

## **TIME LIMIT**

Preferably, two swallows. If this is very difficult, then up to 5 or 6 minutes is acceptable.

## **HAGADAH**

The proper time for starting the Seder is right after tzeis Hakochovim. Upon arriving home from Maariv, one should promptly start the Seder in order that the children should not fall asleep before eating the Matzoh and Maror and the meal. Therefore, one should say the Hagadah as quickly as possible, and save the commentaries for later on.

## **LEANING**

The mitzvoh of "hasayvah" is to give one a feeling of freedom; one must lean comfortably. The Minhag is that women do not lean.