

לוקוטי ופסקי הלכות "חוקי חיים"

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שע"י "חדר הוראה" שכונת מנחת יצחק פניה"ק ירושלם תובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

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Please do not
read during
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Krias Hatorah

Baking Matzos

Va'Yakhel – Parah 5785

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The Dough

Becoming Chometz

1. After making the dough, optimally one should be working with the dough without a moment's pause until baking it to prevent it from becoming chometz. As long as one is working with it, even all day, it does not become chometz (ש"ע תנ"ס ט"ב).

Lapse in Activity Before Forming the Matzah

2. If, before the dough was flattened, it sat untouched for 18 minutes, it is chometz (ש"ע ומ"ב שם), even if it does not display signs of chometz (מ"ב סק"ד). There are a few poskim who hold that time spent working with the dough is included in the 18 minutes (רי"ז הובא בב"ח שם, ערוה"ש שם ס"ח).
3. If one is unsure if 18 minutes have elapsed, as long as the dough does not display signs of chometz [i.e., the dough's surface has not paled], one does not need to be concerned, perhaps the time has elapsed. (חזו"א א"ח קב סק"ט).

Lapse After Starting to Form the Matzah

4. If one flattened the dough and warmed it with his hands and then put it down, it immediately becomes chometz (ש"ע שם). This means that the dough becomes chometz as soon as it leaves his hands (מ"ב סק"ה). Most people are not so careful about this. Perhaps "immediately" is not literal; rather it means after a short time (מ"ב שם) or after a few moments (ביאה"ל תסא ס"ג ד"ה ויש).
5. It is unclear what constitutes "a short time" or "a few moments." It cannot mean that it becomes chometz after only a few seconds. If the dough was motionless for less than 30 seconds [the amount of time it takes to make a new dough, which the Mishna Berura (סקמ"ג) permits bedieved], it is definitely not forbidden, especially in light of the fact that some hold the Rama is of the opinion that although it is preferable to avoid letting the dough sit, if it did, it is not forbidden (חזו"א א"ח קבא סק"ז). If it sat for 30 seconds, its status starts getting questionable.

Multiple Shorter Lapses

6. Some say that if the dough sat still for a sum total of 18 minutes, even if it never sat for one full 18-minute period, it is forbidden because multiple shorter lapses add up (מהרי"ל). Therefore, one should hurry when making matzos (רמ"א שם ט"ב).
7. Some hold that substantial activity with the dough [e.g., mixing, kneading, pounding, or flattening] nullifies a prior lapse in activity, and it does not combine with subsequent lapses. However, minor activity [e.g. cutting, or perforating], although not itself considered a lapse which can cause the dough to become chometz, does not nullify prior lapses (תרומת הדשן קכג הובא במ"ב סק"ז).

Types of Activity

8. Only working with the whole dough – not part of it – prevents it from becoming chometz. Also, slow motion movement or stroking the dough is not considered activity. In fact, the dough is more likely to become chometz when warmed by the hands (מ"ב סק"ב).
9. Therefore, the one in charge of cutting the dough must take great care to constantly work with all the dough until he passes along the pieces to get flattened. Still, it is better for the dough to sit still than for him to gently roll or stroke it. Similarly, if matzos waiting to get perforated are accumulating, it is better that they sit still than get stroked or tapped lightly. The best would be to avoid accumulation of matzos by appointing a second person perforating.

Blood

10. Anyone involved in making matzos should be sure not to have a wound producing blood on his hands which may get into the dough and cause it to become chometz faster, as fruit juice does (ש"ע תסב ט"ב). If one has a wound, he should bandage it, replacing the bandage every 18 minutes, similar to the halacha regarding the tablecloth (מ"ב תנא סק"ה). One should not put any cream on his hands while working with matzos.

Quantity of Dough

11. One should not knead a quantity of dough for matzos greater than that which requires hafroschas challah – the volume of 43.2 average-sized eggs (ש"ע א"ח תנו), because Chazal estimated that the normal work one person does when making dough will not prevent it from becoming chometz in such a quantity (מ"ב סק"א). Bedieved, however, it is permissible (ש"ע ט"ב).
12. In modern-day terms, one should not knead more than 1.25 kg. [Rav Chaim Naeh] or 1.2 kg. [Chazon Ish], which are the amounts requiring hafroschas challah without a bracha [Issue 14, Halacha 8]. Some hold that one should not knead more than 1 kg. of flour at a time (קובץ אגרות לחזו"א ח"א אגרת קפ"ה אות ה).
13. Some poskim hold, that only applied back then, but nowadays that matzos are made in large groups of people working very quickly, using rolling pins, and in very large ovens, one can bake more than the above amount at one time, as is common practice (מ"ב סק"ז). However, a yerei shamayim should be machmir even today (מ"ב).
14. **Machine matzos.** Some permit making more than the above amount in a machine, because machines are powerful and work the dough more vigorously than a person can (ש"ע מנח"י ח"ג קמ אות). One may make up to three kav (ש"ע צ"צ סק"י) [Rav Chaim Naeh – approx. 4 kg.; Chazon Ish – approx. 7 kg.], as long as it can be made within 18 minutes. Some allow even more than that in a machine. (הליכות שלמה פסח פ"ז דבר הלכה אות טז).

Adding Flour

15. After making the dough, one may not add flour (ש"ע תנ"ס ט"ו) because it may not get mixed into the dough and fully baked, and may then fall into soup on Pesach and become chometz (מ"ב סקמ"ב).
16. If the dough is too soft, someone else (מ"ב סקמ"ג) should make a piece of thicker dough and mix that with the soft dough (ש"ע שם).
17. This halacha only applies to those who eat gebrochts. Those who are careful not to eat gebrochts need not be careful with this, because even if some flour is not fully baked, it cannot become chometz without soaking in liquid (כמבואר במ"ב סקמ"ד).
18. **Machine matzos.** It used to be common in machine matzah factories – even ones with a good hechsher – for flour to fall into the vat of dough after the start of the kneading. In such a case, it would be forbidden to put that matzah into hot liquid.
19. Therefore, even those who generally eat gebrochts on Pesach may not eat these matzos as gebrochts (ש"ע ירושלים ז"ע בדרשת). However, if the matzah fell into a dish, or one put it into a dish not knowing this halacha, it is not forbidden bedieved (מ"ב סקמ"ד). Today this problem has been rectified.

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"Lishmah"

Matzos Mitzvah

20. We learn from the pasuk which says, "You shall guard the matzos" that the matzos used at the Seder must be guarded for the sake of matzos mitzvah, even if there is no specific concern that they became chometz, or there is a sfei sfei, or some other reason to permit them (מ"ב תג סק"א).
21. L'al Yisroel have taken upon themselves to only use matzah that was guarded from the time of grinding, or at least kneading (מ"ב) for the sake of matzah throughout the entire Pesach. Some only use matzah that was watched from the time of the harvest throughout Pesach (הגר"א הובא בביא"ל תג ס"ד ד"ה טוב), especially in locales where rain in the summer is common (ש"ת מהרש"ג נ"א אות ב), (מעשה רב אות קפ).

Definition of Lishmah

22. Lishmah in the context of watching matzos does not refer to intent for the sake of a mitzvah (ש"ת עונג י"ט ס"ב). We learn from the above pasuk that the matzos must be guarded from becoming chometz with the intent that these matzos will be used for the mitzvah of matzah.

Saying "Lesheim Matzas Mitzvah"

23. One does not need to specify before making each matzah that it is for matzas mitzvah; it suffices to say it once at the beginning of the process (ביא"ל תס ס"א ד"ה וקטן). However, if there was an interruption, or if he relocated (א"א בוטשאטש מהד"ת ס"ב), he should be machmir and repeat that everything is for matzas mitzvah.
24. There is an old custom to say "Lesheim matzas mitzvah" at the beginning of the process. This covers the entire procedure of guarding, baking, etc. (מ"ב פוסק הדור, מועדים וחמנים ח"ג רסא אות ח).
25. Some say it should be worded in the future tense: "Anything which will be done today involving this matzah will all be for the sake of matzas mitzvah" (ביא"ל שם). Others say it should be in the present tense: "Anything I am doing today..." (חזו"א דינים והנהגות פ"ז אות ב) or "We are doing everything for the sake of matzas mitzvah" (חזו"א, (קובץ אגרות ח"א קפ"ה אות ב).
26. Some point out that the focus of the lishmah intent is on guarding the Matzos from becoming chometz, not on making the matzos. To emphasize this, it is better to say, "Anything I will do today, and the guarding of the matzos from becoming chometz, is for the sake of matzas mitzvah" (מ"ב פוסק הדור שם).

Fold in the Matzah and Inflated Matzah

Folds

27. Sometimes, during the baking, part of the matzah folds over onto itself. The poskim were concerned – as a chumra (חוק יעקב סק"ח, (שעה"צ תסא סק"ז) – that the part of the matzah which folded over and stuck to itself did not get fully baked and may become chometz (רמ"א תסא ס"ה).
28. If this matzah was baked on Pesach, the entire matzah is forbidden. If, as is more common, it was baked before Pesach, only the area of the fold (רמ"א שם) and its immediate surroundings (מ"ב) – two cm. according to Rav Chaim Naeh – are forbidden. One can rely on Rav Chaim Naeh's measurement since this whole concept is a chumra.
29. Some differentiate between thick and thin matzos. They hold that the poskim were only worried that the fold of a thick matzah dough would not get fully baked, but by thin dough [like that which is made nowadays], we assume that even the fold got fully baked (ש"ת רדב"ז ח"א תצד, דע"ת למהרש"ם). Still, the custom is to be machmir even by thin matzos (בש"ת קנה בשם ח"א ס"ב כג).

Types of Folds

30. **With air space.** If the matzah folded, but did not attach to itself; rather, it left a gap of air space in the fold – even a tiny space (ש"ת הרב) – it is not forbidden, as the fire comes into contact with all of the matzah, assuming the inner surface of the fold crusted over (מ"ב סק"ה). If it did not, the matzah is forbidden mideoraisa (מ"ב סק"ז). If one is uncertain if it crusted over, since it is a potential issue deoraisa, it is forbidden (שם).
31. **Without air space.** If the top of the fold is in contact with the bottom, but not attached, that part of the matzah is forbidden (שעה"צ סק"ג). (ש"ת הרב סי"ט וכו', ש"ת קנה בשם שם) happens when the matzah is placed into the oven.

32. **Slight connection.** Sometimes the top of the fold connects to the bottom to the extent that, when separated, strands of dough stretch out. This is more common by soft dough; less so with our matzos which are made with firm dough. In this case, some consider it thick dough as opposed to a fold in the matzah, and permit it if there is an additional reason to be lenient (חמד משה הובא). (בביא"ל תסא ד"ה זו על זו) Perhaps the opinion that is lenient on today's thin matzos (29) can also be taken into consideration.
33. Some are machmir since this type of connection is considered a fold, not one piece of dough (ש"ת קנה בשם שם אות ב).
34. Fold made while flattening the dough. If a fold was pressed so tightly that it is impossible to separate the upper and lower parts, as if it had been kneaded together, it does not invalidate the matzah. It happens often while flattening the dough that a bit of dough folds over and gets flattened together until only a faint line is visible. This matzah may be eaten on Pesach.
35. Some poskim are machmir even in such a case (חזו"א, דינים והנהגות פ"ז). However, most poskim are meikel, and even the Chazon Ish was only machmir for himself (חזו"א פ"ב סק"י).

Matzos on Top of Each Other in the Oven

36. If one matzah, or even part of a matzah, rested on top of another matzah in the oven, both matzos are forbidden at the point of contact, as the fire cannot get to that part of the dough (רמ"א תסא ס"ה).
37. Whilst placing Matzos in the oven, one should ideally prevent those matzos from touching the matzos already in the oven. However, if they did touch, they do not become forbidden since they do not attach and are separated right away (חזו"א ד"ה ונראה).

Matzos Touching Each Other

38. If two matzos are next to each other in the oven and are touching at their edges, they may be eaten on Pesach because the fire touches the whole bottom surface (מ"ב סק"ח). Still, it is best to try to avoid any contact (שם).

Inflated Matzah

39. Matzah which is inflated in the middle is forbidden (רמ"א תסא ס"ה). There are two interpretations of "inflated": 1) a pocket of air developed between the top and bottom of the matzah, or 2) a section of the matzah rose without the top and bottom separating. One must be machmir by both (מ"ב סק"ג).
40. Air pockets or risen sections only invalidate the matzah if they have the width and height (הגר"א קנייסק, ארחות רבינו ח"ב עמ' נה) of a hazelnut or the average thumb (מ"ב סק"ד). In modern-day terms, that is 2 cm. [Rav Chaim Naeh] or 2.2 cm. [Chazon Ish].
41. When a section of the matzah inflates, the entire matzah is forbidden, even if it was baked before Pesach (מ"ב סק"ד), because the inflation indicates that the dough was not worked enough to prevent it from starting to become chometz (ש"ת הרב ס"ה).
42. An air pocket in the middle [1st interpretation] only invalidates the matzah if the top and bottom parts are of equal thickness. If, as is common, the bottom part is thick and the top is thin like a membrane, it is permitted (רמ"א שם ומ"ב סק"ה).

Modern-Day Matzos

43. Some say inflation is only a problem with thick matzos; not with our thin matzos, because the fire's heat is strong enough to prevent them from becoming chometz (ש"ת סק"ז והובא במ"ב סק"ה). Especially when the top part is very thin (42) (ש"ת קנה בשם ח"א כד). However, if the place of inflation is visibly under-baked, it is customary to break off that area (מצות מצוה פ"ט הערה כט).
44. Also, when a section of today's matzos rises [2nd interpretation], they may be eaten on Pesach because the rising is not due to chometz; rather it is due to too few holes or the strength of the fire (ערוה"ש ס"ב).

Inspecting Matzos

45. Generally speaking, factories with a good hechsher appoint someone to check each matzah for folds or inflation, avoiding any possible concerns. Nevertheless, it is a good idea for each person to check his matzos, as sometimes shailos arise.



Mechiras Chometz
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especially for those
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