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"חוקי חיים"

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

Halochos compiled by HaRav Chaim Bleier – Translated from the Hebrew edition by R' Zerachya Shicker

Minhagim of

Pesach

Foods

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Food-Related Pesach Minhagim – 1

Shemini 5782

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Abundance of Minhagim on Pesach

Pesach Minhagim

1. Pesach encompasses many detailed halachos, but also, more than any other yom tov, it is replete with various minhagim, particularly ones having to do with foods. These minhagim have been passed down in families and communities for many years. We received them from our forebears, and we impart them to our children to fulfill them with love and pride for our roots. Although sometimes the circumstances change and the reason for a minhag is not so applicable, the principles of "אל תטוש תורת אמך", "מנהג אבותינו בידינו", "אל תטוש תורת אמך", "מנהג אבותינו בידינו", "מנהג עוקר הלכה", and "מנהג ישראל תורה היא" all apply.
2. **After the coronavirus pandemic.** In the past two years, Pesach was at the height of COVID-19, presenting certain challenges to many people making Pesach. Some people needed to forgo certain minhagim to ease their situation (see Issues 172, 173). Now that, with Hashem's help, the pandemic is almost behind us – and we daven that He help us further – we saw a need to revitalize this area by maintaining and reinforcing minhagim and traditions. Thus, we will discuss several foods that some people, mainly in Ashkenazi communities, have the minhag not to eat so that the reader will understand the reasons and background behind these minhagim.

Why Are We More Machmir on Pesach?

3. **First mitzvah.** Some say we are more machmir on Pesach than we are the rest of the year because Pesach was the first mitzvah all of Klal Yisroel was commanded to keep. They lovingly accepted it upon themselves and were machmir on all its aspects. Whoever is meticulous will have his years extended (ש"ת מן השמים סי' ע"ג).
4. **The Torah is machmir.** Others say it is because the Torah itself is very machmir about Pesach: one may not even benefit from chometz and the punishment is kareis. Also, we are not in the habit of avoiding chometz all year round (ר"ן פסחים דף ב' ע"א, ש"ת רדב"ז ח"ג סי' תקמ"ו). Since we see Hashem is machmir about Pesach, we, as His servants, are machmir too (לקט יושר דף צ' בשם תרומת הדשן).
5. **What chometz symbolizes.** Another reason given is that chometz symbolizes night, evil, and the yetzer hara. We therefore stay as far away as possible with all sorts of chumros (ר"ן פסחים דף ב' ע"א, ש"ת רדב"ז ח"ג סי' תקמ"ו).
6. **Didn't change names, language, dress.** Others say that since we left Mitzrayim in the zechus of the added chumra of not changing our names, language, or dress, we carefully keep chumros to a greater extent than the rest of the year (משך חכמה פ' בא עה"פ ואתם לא תצאו).

Minhag Not to Eat Matzah before Pesach

Erev Pesach

7. **14th day.** There is an issur derabanan to eat on erev Pesach matzah fit for the mitzvah at the Seder (רמ"א סי' תע"א ס"א) to distinguish the matzah that will be eaten for the mitzvah (רמב"ם פ"ו ח"מ ה"ב) from the matzah that will be eaten with an appetite, as not eating it for a period makes a person enjoy its taste.
8. **14th night.** Some say this issur starts at alos on Erev Pesach (ח"ק יעקב, מ"ב), but many poskim hold the issur starts the previous night, when the chiyuv to check for chometz to ultimately get rid of starts (ש"ת רב פעלים ח"ג או"ח סי' כ"ז, (הגר"ש"א, הגש"פ עמ"ל 18 (הגר"ש"א, הגש"פ עמ"ל 18).

Before Erev Pesach

9. **30 days.** Some have the minhag not to eat matzah starting from Purim, which is 30 days before Pesach (ש"ת אג"מ או"ח ח"א סי' קנ"ה), (רמב"ם פ"ו ח"מ ה"ב) but many poskim hold the issur starts the previous night, when the chiyuv to check for chometz to ultimately get rid of starts (ש"ת רב פעלים ח"ג או"ח סי' כ"ז, (הגר"ש"א, הגש"פ עמ"ל 18).

(ר' ע"א). This is because we follow the opinion that the issur to eat matzah starts before the issur to eat chometz does (ש"ת אג"מ שם).

10. Another reason is based on the halachah that one says Shehecheyanu upon seeing a friend for the first time in 30 days (ש"ת אג"מ סי' ר"ה ס"א). This shows that 30 days is a period of time that creates excitement and joy, leading a person to cherish something (מנהגי מהר"ץ הלוי פ"ז הע' א').
11. **Rosh Chodesh Nissan.** However, many have the minhag not to eat matzah fit for the mitzvah starting Rosh Chodesh Nissan (שיירי כנסת) as Chazal did not want to make things too difficult for us with their issur to eat matzah. Thus, they practice the issur from Rosh Chodesh Nissan, which is when we begin studying the halachos according to Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel (אג"מ שם).

Which Matzos to Avoid

12. The poskim discuss which types of matzos are subject to the minhag not to eat matzah before Pesach. In general, matzah that, according to halachah, may not be eaten on Erev Pesach is subject to the minhag starting from Rosh Chodesh or Purim. It also depends on whether it is true chometz or only treated like chometz as a chumra, as will be explained.
13. **Matzah ashirah.** Strictly speaking, matzah ashirah may be eaten before Pesach since it cannot be used for the mitzvah at the Seder. Also, the taste of the fruit juice is detectable, so it tastes different than matzah for the mitzvah (מ"ב סק"י). However, some hold that matzah ashirah may also not be eaten before Pesach (ביאור הגר"א, (שער הציון סי' תמ"ד סק"א).
14. **Folded or inflated matzah.** Even though we are machmir to treat folded or inflated matzah as chometz (see Issue 82), it may not be eaten before Pesach because strictly speaking, it is matzah (מ"ב שם סק"ב).
15. **Not lishmah.** Matzah that is kosher for Pesach but was not made lishmah may not be eaten before Pesach even when Erev Pesach falls on Shabbos since it is not chometz. One should not be meikel with this (ש"ת מנח"י ח"ה סי' ל"ז ד"ה הנה יש, הגרש"א שש"כ פנ"ו הע' מ"ו).
16. **Chometz machine matzah.** Machine matzah should not be eaten before Pesach even if it is labeled "chometz." It is not necessarily chometz, as the machines do not run slower when making matzos for the rest of the year. The matzah is only treated as chometz because they are not careful about crumbs or making it lishmah, but it is considered matzah with respect to the issur not to eat matzah before Pesach as it tastes the same as matzah (ש"ת מנח"י שם). Some allow a person who only eats hand matzah on Pesach to be meikel and eat chometz machine matzah until Erev Pesach (הגר"ש וואנזר, (קובץ מבית לוי פסח פנ"א אות א, מרא דשמעתא הל' פסח הע' רט since 1) it is treated as chometz, and 2) it has a slightly different taste.
17. **Kosher for Pesach machine matzah.** Machine matzah that is kosher for Pesach may not be eaten before Pesach since it is considered matzah fit for the mitzvah. Even people who only eat hand matzah should not eat kosher for Pesach machine matzah before Pesach. However, those who follow the Divrei Chaim (ח"א) זצ"ל (סי' כ"ג כ"ד) and treat machine matzah as actual chometz may, strictly speaking, eat it before Pesach. Still, some refrain from doing so.

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Various Food-Related Pesach Minhagim

Eating Out

18. Many people do not eat in other homes on Pesach. This is because each family has its own minhagim and protective measures and not everyone is equally cautious. To avoid differentiating between individuals, people do not eat out at all. Everyone is familiar with the words "We don't mish." This avoids embarrassing individual people by refusing to eat at their houses (פלא יענץ, מועד לכל חי סי' ב' (אות י"ז)).

Products Made in Factories

19. For the same reason, many people also do not eat food products made in factories even if they have an excellent hechsher. As the Gaavad of Yerushalayim once said in reference to this minhag, "Not everything with a Badatz Eidah Chareidis hechsher needs to be eaten on Pesach" (דרשת שבת הגדול בהיכל מהר"ץ דושינסקי). People practice this minhag to differing extents.
20. **Fruit juice.** Some are machmir on everything, even the simplest products made from one ingredient, e.g., orange juice, lemon juice, apple juice, etc. They only drink juices they make at home [but they don't usually make grape juice themselves]. Others do consume these simple products consisting of just one ingredient.
21. **Basic items.** Many people eat basic factory-made products that do not contain different types of ingredients. They will eat things like sugar, potato starch, cocoa, coffee, tea, milk, and the like.
22. **More complex products.** Many people refrain from eating complex, factory-made foods consisting of multiple ingredients as these are more similar to foods made by other people. The more ingredients something has, the harder it is to be vigilant about its kashrus or chometz getting mixed in.

Fish

23. Some people do not eat any fish on Pesach because back in the day, when carp was transported between cities, a piece of chometz with schnapps was placed in its mouth right after it was taken out of the water (פמ"ג א"א סוף סי' תמ"ז סקמ"ו). In the past, schnapps was also rubbed onto fish to preserve it. These practices were a cause for concern about chometz. Although these are not done today, some continue to refrain from eating fish.
24. **Live fish.** Because of this concern, some people only buy live fish from a reservoir, which does not run into any problems of chometz (ויגד משה סי' כ"ז אות ט', דרכי חיים ושלום מנהגי פסח אות תר"ו).
25. **Herring.** The Ashkenazi minhag is not to eat herring or pickled fish on Pesach because it might have been salted with salt that was previously used for chometz and had chometz mixed in (רמ"א סי' (תמ"ז ס"ה). There is also a concern it was salted in a chometz dish. Although today the salt is clean and kosher for Pesach, the minhag still exists.
26. **"Falsche fish" – mock fish.** Among those who do not eat fish on Pesach, some make ground meat patties that look like gefilte fish but contain no actual fish. When serving this to others, e.g., at a tish, they must be informed that it is meat, not fish, to prevent potential problems (מחזור דברי יואל אות פ"ז). [Some make sure to call them meat patties instead of falshe fish out of caution for "שקר תרחק מדבר" (שם)].

Garlic

27. Some people do not eat garlic on Pesach; the reason for this is unclear (רמ"ג א"א תס"ד סק"א). Some write that it is based on the minhag cited by the Rama (תס"ז ס"ה) not to eat dried fruits on Pesach (below, 30); since garlic is usually dry, people did not eat it even when it was not dry. Others write there is no logical reason not to eat garlic and the minhag developed due to a mistaken understanding of the Magen Avraham (ח"י אדם כלל קכ"ז אות ז). Nevertheless, one who has this minhag should maintain it due to the principle of "את טעם תורת" (פתחא זוטא סי' ב' אות ז בשם הגר"ש מעלזא) "אמך".

Fruit and Vegetable Peels

28. **Peeling fruits, vegetables.** Many people peel all fruits and vegetables before eating them out of concern that the peel came in contact with chometz and that there are chometz derivatives in the substances they are sprayed with (ח"י אדם כלל קכ"ז אות ב').
29. **Soft skin.** Some do not eat fruits or vegetables with a soft skin, e.g., strawberries, peaches, peppers, and tomatoes, since they are usually eaten with their skin and it is difficult to peel them. Nevertheless, one who wants to go to the effort of peeling them may eat them. Some people just rinse them with water.
30. **Dried fruits.** Some people do not eat dried fruits (רמ"א סי' תס"ז ס"ה). The reason is because flour is sprinkled on them when they are dried and there is a concern some flour got stuck to the fruit. Another concern is that they were dried in a chometz oven (מ"ב שם סקמ"ו).
31. **Pickles.** Some people do not eat pickles on Pesach because they are pickled in their peels, which may have come in contact with chometz.
32. **Cloves.** Some people do not use cloves on Pesach because they are soaked in barley water or ethanol, which is a potential chometz concern (קובץ מבית לוי ח"ה ס"ד), before they are dried (מ"ב תס"ז סקל"ד).
33. **Smelling cloves.** Because of this, they are also machmir not to smell cloves. For Havdalah on Motzei Shabbos Chol Hamoed, they use hadasim instead (ארחות רבינו ח"ב עמ' פ"ז).

Chicken

34. **Insides.** Some people do not eat poultry intestines, gizzard, or liver out of concern for the presence of a wheat kernel on Pesach. Some are meikel on liver since it is not part of the digestive system.
35. **Cooking before Pesach.** Some are careful to buy and cook poultry before Pesach. They are concerned that if they find a wheat kernel, it will make the entire dish assur, whereas if it is cooked before Pesach, even if wheat is found, the taste is botul b'shishim. This is because bitul b'shishim works before Pesach, whereas on Pesach, the smallest amount of chometz is not botul.

Eggs

36. **Rinsing.** Some people rinse eggs before use on Pesach; some place them in designated plastic Pesach containers after cleaning. This is due to a concern that crumbs of chometz from the chicken feed got stuck to some eggshells, and the smallest amount of chometz on Pesach makes an entire dish assur (ב"א ח"א פ' צו אות ל'). Although eggs today undergo a thorough washing process, some people maintain the minhag.
37. **Stamp on eggs.** Some people only buy eggs on Pesach without the pink stamp out of concern for chometz in the ink. Even though one can be meikel since the ink is inedible, people still maintain the minhag as a chumra. There are kashrus agencies that address this by ensuring that the ink used for the eggs does not contain any potential chometz. These eggs are stamped "כ. פסה" with pink ink (מדריך השטרות בד"ץ עדה"ח תשפ"א ח"ב עמ' 155).
38. **Pot just for eggs.** Some people designate a pot just for cooking eggs. They do not cook anything else in that pot out of concern that the eggs sat in chometz flour and the pot walls absorbed chometz particles (א"א בוטשאטס סי' תמ"ז סק"ד).

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