

# דיני מצה עשירה בערב פסח שחל בשבת

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### 1. *The איסור of מצה עשירה on Pesach*

מחבר in תסב, borrowing language from the Gemara, characterizes matzo kneaded with מי פרות as «אין מחמיצין כלל». מ"ב elaborates on this that this is true even of fermented juices. מחבר elaborates that if water is mixed with fruit juice, this “accelerates the process of חימוץ.” This complicates matters greatly, so we will assume for this discussion that all water has been carefully kept away from the process.

רמ"א here brings the Ashkenazic prohibition against egg matzo: that our custom is not to knead matzo with fruit juice, including eggs. מ"ב adds: לכתחילה, because of the opinions of “*poskim* who hold that מי פרות do inherently cause חימוץ, or at least accelerate the process.” (More in a moment.) רמ"א goes on to say that we should not deviate from this custom except in case of great need for the elderly, sick, etc. מ"ב on this adds that this means that even when we are careful that no water has gotten into the mixture, we do not allow מצה עשירה to be eaten except in these times of great need of the elderly, sick, etc. But we can hold the egg matzo, and use it after Pesach.

ערוך השלח here decries modern disregard for this minhag among healthy people. He brings two reasons. First, this custom of “hundreds of years” has the status of a נדר. Second, he points out that רש"י and some opinions in ירושלמי hold that מצה עשירה is הלכה על פי הלכה. Indeed, Rashi maintains that מי פרות accelerate the process of חמוץ, and he claims that “no one can prevent this from happening.” His understanding of «אין מחמיצין כלל» is that מי פרות do not cause the formation of חמץ גמור, but only חמץ נוקשה, chametz whose formation has been stopped in the middle, before חמץ גמור results. One may not eat חמץ נוקשה on Pesach, and its possession on Pesach only violates דרבנן, but one is required to dispose of it before Pesach. According to this view, we are also concerned that water might have become mixed with fruit juice, forming חמץ גמור.

It is clear from מחבר and רמ"א, however, that the Halacha is not according to Rashi and the others cited in ירושלמי. We do not hold that מצה עשירה is חמץ נוקשה, but in deference to that opinion, because we are so careful to avoid chametz on Pesach, we maintain the custom not to knead מצה עשירה for Pesach.

Note two important points. First, the language is always מנהג, albeit one with status of a נדר. It is not a matter of Halacha *per se*. Second, the language generally discusses not kneading matzo with fruit juice, rather than discussing not eating it. The fear seems to be in the creation of חמץ during the kneading process, before baking, not that already-baked egg matzo will become chametz (the *gebrukts* problem). Of course, later authorities like מ"ב and ערה"ש mention eating, but to earlier authorities, kneading was primary: if you couldn't make it, you couldn't eat it.

## 2. **Can one eat מצה עשירה on Erev Pesach?**

In תעא, the מחבר says, "Yes." (There is a prohibition after the ninth hour, based on having an appetite for matzo at the Seder, and in any case also a broader prohibition about eating full meals on Erev Shabbat or Erev Yom Tov after the ninth hour.) רמ"א only elaborates that this is because the prohibition against eating matzo on Erev Pesach only applies to matzo by which one may fulfill מצה אכילת on Pesach -- but this does not apply to מצה עשירה, which cannot be used for that purpose. מ"ב reminds us here that Ashkenazim do not knead matzo with מי פרות, as we have discussed. But this argument only applies when we are concerned with *chametz*, so it seems that at least as long as we are not concerned with *chametz*, there is nothing wrong with eating egg matzo on Pesach. (This is different from fulfilling Shabbat meals with egg matzo. At a minimum, this only means that if you want to eat egg matzo on Erev Pesach, you can.)

## 3. **Until when can one eat מ"ע on Erev Pesach?**

I have found no halachic disagreement as to whether it is permitted to eat מצה עשירה through the fourth hour. Both אגרות משה and ערוך הרב hold this way. This means that one can certainly eat מצה עשירה at one's Shabbat evening סעודה, and at one's morning סעודה, if early enough in the day. There is another issue as to whether one can be קובע סעודה on מצה עשירה, which we will get to soon.

But before we get there, what about morning סעודה or שלישיית סעודה later than the fourth hour? Some of the things I learned about this were very interesting!

in תמד מחבר says we don't use מצה at שלישיית סעודה, nor do we use חמץ, but rather we (Sefardim) should use מצה עשירה. (He again points out that the meal should be eaten before the tenth hour.) רמ"א, of course, brings up that we don't eat מצה עשירה in Ashkenazi territory, and so we use fruit, meat and wine instead for שלישיית סעודה. (He does use language of eating, rather than kneading, here, but the discussion is specifically about eating.) Thus far is predictable, but now watch what follows.

First, חק יעקב: we understand that we are מחמירין with respect to מצה עשירה only on Pesach, not Erev Pesach. However, in the name of מהרי"ל he brings down that nevertheless we do not eat מצה עשירה at סעודה שלישית on Erev Pesach.

Second, ערה"ש: there is no intention whatsoever to prohibit מ"ע on Erev Pesach at all. And in fact, the only intention in prohibiting eating of מ"ע on Pesach is so that we will not knead מ"ע for Pesach! This parallels the conclusion reached earlier: we are concerned with חימוץ in the kneading process, not "egg matzo *gebrukts*," and the eating prohibition is only secondary to the kneading prohibition. ערה"ש adds that a person "normally would not prepare מ"ע just for סעודה שלישית." It is not clear from the excerpt I had available whether he is saying as פשט that we don't normally see מ"ע on Erev Pesach for this reason (and because making it correctly without חימוץ is particularly difficult), or that in fact we do not permit this, as extra מ"ע is likely to be prepared that would be left over during Pesach.

(This brings up an interesting side point. ערה"ש, as well as מחבר and רמ"א, take it for granted that we are eating *chametz* for the first two meals. מחבר and רמ"א even assume we use our *chametzdik* utensils for the first two meals, and spend some time admonishing us to be careful not to cook foods that will stick to the pot, since scrubbing a pot on Shabbat is problematic. ערה"ש's point is well taken, then under the circumstances. But one might well wonder what these authorities would rule in places where using *pesachdik* utensils on this day is the rule.)

Back to the main point, finally, is נודע ביהודה: "If it were not that the head of teachers, namely רמ"א, has already prohibited מ"ע even on Erev Pesach, I would permit it all day. But in any case I teach that even up to חצות (!) is permitted according to the רמ"א, and that there is room to permit later in the day in case of even slight need, not only for the sick, elderly, etc."(!)

Presumably, the חצות argument goes something like this. The prohibition of egg matzo is only *minhag* anyway, and since the *minhag* does not even apply to Erev Pesach explicitly, and since egg matzo doesn't even have the halachic status of ספק חמץ, we should certainly be able to use it before noon, when the prohibition against חמץ is only דרבנן.

There is plenty of precedent, however, not to be lenient about food at Pesach time; the same arguments can be made about קטניות on Erev Pesach, but we are not lenient about that either. On the other hand, perhaps if one failed to complete his morning (second) סעודה – which has a stronger need for bread than does the third meal – by the fourth hour, one could rely on this opinion. Don't rely on me, anyway; consult your Friendly Local Halachic Authority.

In any case, you can summarize this part of the discussion as follows:

- על פי הלכה, and even according to the פשט of the Ashkenazi *minhag* to prohibit

מ"ע on Pesach itself, there is nothing wrong with eating egg matzo any time during the day of Erev Pesach.

- Nevertheless, during the period of Erev Pesach when we do not eat *chametz*, we also do not eat egg matzo. This is because while there is nothing wrong with making egg matzo for Erev Pesach, we do not want to encourage the making of egg matzo at all absent a great need.
- As far as the period of Erev Pesach when *chametz* is permitted, the אחרונים take for granted that we will eat *chametz*, and do not worry about whether we will make egg matzo for this purpose. Contemporary poskim do permit the eating of egg matzo at least before the fourth hour, and possibly until noon. Presumably they have conceded that industrially produced, rabbinically certified egg matzo will not go away, and that there is consequently little basis for prohibiting it when one can even eat חמץ גמור.

(Side bar: The economic arguments could apply here, too -- why not prohibit all purchases of egg matzo with Pesach supervision, משום מראית עין, and to try to prevent the development of any industry for Pesach egg matzos? However, even Ashkenazim have legitimate Pesach uses for egg matzo. And even מ"ב holds that if you have some egg matzo, you can keep it and use it after Pesach, without disposing of it. Those issues, plus the Sefardic *minhag* to permit, plus the fact that this whole issue is fairly removed from the actual איסור of *chametz* on Pesach, probably combine to explain why the supervising authorities cannot kill the egg matzo industry.)

#### 4. **Can you be קובע סעודה on egg matzo?**

According to R' Shimon Eider, egg matzo is considered פת הבאה בכיסנין (snack bread). Normally, this would make its proper bracha מזונות. However, if one eats a sufficient quantity of פת הבאה בכיסנין, then one is קובע סעודה, and must make המוציא and *bentsch*. According to various opinions, this quantity may be anywhere from three egg matzos to about twelve, or may be a “non-trivial” amount of egg matzo along with enough other food to make a meal. This is a very interesting shiur in its own right, and I commend you to Rabbi Yaakov Luban’s article on “*mezonot* rolls” in [the Winter 1994] *Jewish Action*. [Rabbi Luban is on the OU’s *kashrut* staff and is Rabbi of Congregation Ohr Torah in Edison, NJ.] Bottom line: one can be קובע סעודה on egg matzo, at least under some circumstances, though one has to be careful to plan one's meal accordingly.

Many hold that it is “better” to make המוציא on “real” bread than on פת הבאה בכיסנין. There are those who are always careful to make המוציא on real bread before eating a sufficient quantity of פת הבאה בכיסנין to be קובע סעודה. (If you are in this category, it may be more problematic for you to use egg matzo for an Erev Pesach Shabbat meal.)

Aside from the economic (and aesthetic) arguments as to why it may be better not to buy Pesach egg matzos at all, this point about “real” bread being “better” for המוציא seems to be the primary halachic argument for preferring challah over egg matzo on this

day. It's not a trivial reason, and in truth nobody rules that egg matzo is superior to chametzdik "real" bread for the first two meals of Shabbat-Erev Pesach. But unless you never say המוציא on בכיסנין פת הבאה, if you are at all concerned that chametz could get mixed in with your Pesach utensils, there is support for the use of מצה עשירה even לכתחילה for making סעודות before the fourth hour (or possibly noon) of Shabbat-Erev Pesach. And בדיעבד if you forgot to buy chametzdik rolls, but you do have egg matzo on hand, there certainly seems to be no halachic reason to be concerned with use of egg matzo for your סעודות. But again, don't take my word for it -- ask your Friendly Local Halachic Authority.

One interesting gloss: I spoke with Rabbi David Bassous [Rabbi of Sefardic Congregation Etz Ahaim, Highland Park, NJ] about a week before Erev Pesach about this subject, when he told his congregation he was using egg matzo. To make a long story short, he pointed out that Ashkenazim are more lenient than Sefardim about considering bread made with egg in it (like most of our challah) to be "true" bread, rather than פת הבאה בכיסנין. There's an interesting question: why should egg matzo be considered פת הבאה בכיסנין when egg challah is considered "real" bread?

Please G-d, long before that and the rest of these questions next come up (in תשס"א -- 2001 CE), may we be זוכה to witness the גאולה שלמה, and be privileged to worry about other questions, like how to shecht the קרבן פסח on ערב פסח שחל להיות בשבת.