

EATING MATZAH DURING PESACH

The great controversy among sages and saints of yore, whether there is justification of a stringent practice to abstain from eating matzos during the entire festival of Passover, except on the two Seder nights, even on the Sabbath and the last days of the festival. The origin of this practice is found in the words of the early authorities.

THE STRINGENT PRACTICE OF ABSTAINING FROM EATING MATZAH ON THE OTHER DAYS OF PASSOVER

Shaarei Teshuvah, end of ch. 460: Some abstain from eating matzos on the other days of Passover, except for the Sedarim, for fear of a minute quantity of chometz. They partake only of other dainties. On the other hand, some are particular to eat matzah all through Passover, since bread is the staff of life, and it contributes to the enjoyment of the festival.... Those who adhere to either practice, as long as their intention is for the honor of the Almighty, should be judged as tzaddikim. In the works of the poskim, there is confusion. Some give valid reasons for those who permit this practice, and some disagree. I cite a portion of their words below:

- 1) Yesod, VShoresh Ha Avodah, Shaar 9: It is proper to eat matzah sparingly, even if it was watched from the reaping, for you do not know which matzos are pure of any taint of chometz during the baking. You should sate your hunger with other foods and types of relish.
- 2) Shulchan Melachim (Omissions from laws of tefillin) 354: Indeed, many tzaddikim, although they baked their matzos with the greatest caution, refrained from eating them throughout all days of the festival save for the obligatory olive-sized portions they ate at the sedarim. They include: Yismach Moshe, R'Meir Premishlaner, his son-in-law, R' Avraham of Mikoleiav, the author of Ach Pri Tevuah (the saintly R' Tzvi Hirsch of Liska o.b.m.) his saintly disciples, R' Hirtzka of Raatzfert, o.b.m., the author of Afsei Oretz, his brother R'Naftai Schreiber, his intimate (i.e. of the Lisker (tzaddik), R' Yeshayah Keristerer o.b.m.

WHY GO AGAINST THE SHULCHAN ARUCH?

- 3) Nimmukei Orach Chaim 475 (Munkacz) writes very derogatorily about this stringent practice. Among other things, he writes: I disapprove very strongly of those who abstain from eating matzah throughout the entire festival of Passover. My father, too was very much against this practice (Darchei Teshuvah). You cannot refute my statement by pointing out that many tzaddikim in our country followed this practice, for the saintly gaon, R'Tzvi Hirsch of Zidichov o.b.m., even your own rebbe, doing something contrary to the Shulchan Aruch or the Torah, you should not think anything bad about him, but you may not emulate him in this practice until you understand thoroughly that it is compatible with the Torah. It is, therefore, prohibited to follow those tzaddikim in this practice, but we may not think anything bad about them.
- 4) Shulchan Melachim refutes Nimmukei Orach Chaim and reconciles the practice of chassidim and people of exemplary deeds who followed this custom. As regards to what he wrote that the average person must not try to emulate the deeds of the tzaddikim, he cites that this was not their

own idea, but the Lisker Tzaddik would seek to instruct others to follow this practice, as we find in Darchei Hayashar Vehatov, in which he cites an incident concerning his father-in-law. Once he was in the Lisker Tzaddik's house, when a stranger entered. The Rebbe admonished him concerning Chillul Shabbat, and then turned around to him (the father-in-law of the author of Shulchan Melachim) and said, "When someone comes to me from the region of Hevesh, I admonish him concerning Chillul Shabbat. When someone comes from these regions, I admonish him concerning shaatnes. When someone of your caliber comes, I require him not to eat matzah throughout Pesach."

5) Sefer Zichron Tov, vol. 2, concerning prayer, 23: Concerning matzah shemurah, he quoted his father (the saintly Gaon Maharam of Neschiz o.b.m.) as saying that one who has insufficient matzah shemurah, should eat ordinary matzos rather than abstain from enjoying the festival, which is a mitzvah of the Torah.

6) Toledos Shmuel (Mitzvah 19:1: Some pious people go so far ... that because of their fear ... They abstain from eating matzos throughout Passover, even though they were baked with the greatest caution and stringency, except for the obligatory olive- sized pieces on the two Seder nights. This is because they fear stumbling on a slight chance of a minute particle of chometz.

THE TORAH WAS NOT GIVEN TO ANGELS

7) Sefer Zichron Yehudah (Practices of Maharam Ash o.b.m.): He was critical of those who do not eat matzah at all during Passover, even though his grandfather, the gaon R' Dovid Deutsch ate matzos only on Shabbat and Yom Tov, when one is required to eat bread. He claimed, however, that the Torah was not given to angels. Therefore, a person must be as careful as possible, and then not abstain from enjoying the festival. I see somewhat of a refutation to the proof some bring from the practice of many tzaddikim who ate matzah throughout Passover, according to a tradition from true tzaddikim (Darchei Chaim Vsholom 281), that concerning a stringency, one may rely on divine communication. Because of their extraordinary holiness, these tzaddikim merited divine communication, and the Schechinah rested on them continuously. They were, therefore, able to discern what to eat and what not to eat. We, however, who do not merit even to recognize anything of their holiness, have good reason to abstain from eating matzos. We can, therefore, understand why other tzaddikim abstained from eating matzos, for they did not wish to rely on their divine communication. Shaarei Teshuvah is, therefore, justified in calling both groups tzaddikim, since they both mean the honor of Heaven.

8) Birkei Joseph 453:9 (quoted in Shaarei Teshuvah ibid. 8): Although one was in the habit of not eating matzah, only fruit, on the other days of Passover, even though there is reason to rule that we cannot nullify the vow status of this practice, nevertheless, the correct ruling is that we may nullify its vow status as long as he regrets his acceptance of it as a vow (See quotation from his mentor in Nechpah Bakesef). Shaarei Teshuvah concludes that anyone who wishes to practice abstinence by adopting such stringencies, should stipulate that he has no intention of practicing this indefinitely, but just this time, for sometimes it may be impossible to fulfill it, and he will be guilty of sin. If he forgot to stipulate, however, it appears to me that nullification because if regret is sufficient, as the Machazik Berachah writes in the name of his merto o.b.m.

IT IS PROPER TO REFRAIN FROM EATING MATZAH ON CHOL HA MOED

9) I found the practices of the saintly Gaon, R' Tzvi Hirsch of Liska from the Sefer Darchei Hayashar Vehatot, wherein it is stated that he did not eat matzos during Pesach even on Shabbat and Yom Tov, except on the two Seder nights, the olive-sized piece. There was a reproduction of a letter that he wrote, as follows: Greetings to my dear friend, the famous rabbi, R' Amram Yishai Weil, chief rabbi of Serench. I am sending you the shemurah wheat that I was watching for you. Concerning what you asked me about eating matzah, I can tell you that the Rav of Uhel definitely did not eat matzah except on the two Seder nights, just as much as is required by Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim. The Rav of Ungvar, however, ate matzah on Shabbat and Yom Tov as well, since he wished to fulfill his obligation of eating the Shabbat and festival meals with bread. Most likely, he limited himself to the minimum necessary to fulfill the obligation. Therefore, one may choose whether to follow the practice of the Tzaddik of Uhel or that of the Rav of Ungvar, but it is definitely proper to refrain from eating matzah on Chol Hamoed. Your Friend, Tzvi Hirsch, son of R'Aharon, Chief Rabbi of Liska

He writes further of the customs of the saintly Gaon of Liska:

11) My grandfather was very strict in demanding that in his house no food resembling that made from chometz such as noodles and the like, that people make from potatoes, should be made. He would, likewise, refrain from drinking whiskey even if it was made in the best possible manner. He would not eat sugar, but drank coffee with honey. He said that there is no undue stringency on Pesach.

12) On the last day of Passover, they would recite the shirah verse by verse, just like on the night of the seventh day of Pesach and in the morning during prayer.

13) Toward the end of his life, he did not eat cooked matzah even on the last day of Pesach.

A JEWISH LIBEL ON PASSOVER

Word reached Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, may his merit shield us, that the owners of the local MATZAH bakeries were forcing the young women who kneaded and rolled the dough to work from early morning until late at night. He stood up in the synagogue and cried out: "Gentile anti-Semites always claim that Jews knead their dough for the matzos with the blood of Christians. That is an outright lie! It is not Christian blood they use, but the BLOOD OF THE YOUNG DAUGHTERS OF Israel who are being overworked in our MATZAH bakeries.

(Sippure Chassidim)

BEDIKAT CHAMETZ CHECKLIST

The following is a convenient checklist which itemizes many places and objects which require BEDIKA but are, at times, not so obvious and thus possibly overlooked.

Under beds
Clothes closets, chests
Linen closets
Desks
Cabinets
Drawers
Clothes (pockets, cuffs)
Purses, pocketbooks, handbags
Shopping cart
Crib
High chair
Playpen
Carriage
All toys
Toy chest
Children's toy carriages and wagons
Toy houses and their furniture
Storage room
Safe
Laundry room
Freezer
Basement
Hallways
Attic
Yard
Garden
Garage
Workshop
Den
Office: Desk, drawers, lockers, closets etc.
Factory: Store
Automobile, Truck
Beneath car Seats: Remove car seats
Auto glove compartment, under mats, trunk
Pet house, bird cage (Animal food is probably CHAMETZ)
Behind refrigerator, sink, oven, kitchen cabinets
Perfumes, hairsprays, deodorants

School locker
 Kitchen utensils: Broiler, blender, mixer, can opener
 Shul locker or cubby
 Shelves
 Bookcases
 Breakfront
 Book closet and books
 Wash "broom"
 Infant seat
 Sink trays
 Garbage pails
 Garbage cans
 Behind radiator
 Jewelry, jewelry box
 Cosmetics...Only KOSHER L'PESACH should be used;(Cosmetics are forbidden on Shabbat and Yom Tov)
 Bar (whiskey is CHAMETZ)
 Tallit bag
 Suitcase, valise, travel
 Discard vacuum cleaner bags
 Telephone (remove speaker cover)
 Storage bins
 Country cottages
 Vacuum floors
 Backs of chairs, seats
 Thoroughly wash, clean and vacuum shag rugs and carpets
 Cover sink spout, handles
 Clean oven, range, grates
 Clean sink, refrigerator

These items should be thoroughly cleaned and then
 stored away for the duration of Pesach.

Medicine chest
 Picnic basket
 Cookie jar, breadbox, toaster, candy dish
 Briefcase, school bags, attache case
 Lunch box
 Toothbrush (A new tooth brush is required Chol Ha'moed;)
 Shabbat 'Zmiros' books
 Benschelach (books for Birkat ha Mazon)
 Cookbooks
 Challah utensils, vases, decanters used for Chametz (e.g. whiskey)