



Halacha Highlight

Searching for *chometz* in inaccessible places

Shulchan Aruch Siman 433 Seif 4

והנמוכים פחות משלשה טפחים אינם צריכים בדיקה

Those [holes or protrusions] that are lower than three *tefachim* need not be searched

Shulchan Aruch writes that holes in the wall that are lower than three *tefachim* need not be searched since it is assumed that it was not used for *chometz*. Shulchan Aruch HaRav (ע"י י"ח) adds that holes and crevices on the floor must also be searched even if children are not present, since one must be concerned that *chometz* fell into them. He then writes (סעי' י"ט) that if the floor is made from wooden planks that have only a small but deep hole between the planks and one's hand does not fit into that crevice it is unnecessary for one to remove the planks to search for the *chometz* that fell into these crevices. Even if one knows that *chometz* fell into this hole and will remain there for the duration of Pesach, nevertheless, one is not required to remove that *chometz*. The reason is that the enactment of Chazal to search for *chometz* is due to the fear that *chometz* will be found and someone may unknowingly eat it. When, however, the *chometz* is in a place that one cannot reach, nullification is sufficient. Similarly, if the hole is wide but deep and one cannot reach the place where the *chometz* rests one is not obligated to remove that *chometz* and nullification is sufficient.

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ט) writes that in a house that has children one must search even in places that are low since there is a concern that the children left some *chometz* somewhere. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (הליכות שלמה מועדים ניסן-אב פ"ה סק"א) writes that those places, e.g. the floor, that are mopped with some sort of detergent that ruins whatever *chometz* is there need not be searched. He equates this to the courtyard where ravens come and eat the *chometz* which also exempts one from searching for *chometz* in that place.

Stories to Share

Beyond the Reach of the Law

ש"ע ס' תל"ב, ד': "אבל הגבורים שאין יד האדם מגיע שם..."

In today's amud we find that a place where people cannot reach need not be checked for *chometz*.

The Chakal Yitzchak of Spinka checked for *chometz* even in places that seemed highly unlikely. He would often invite Rav Tzvi Yosef Hoffman to help him during the many hours exhausting hours it took to peer into any possible place where *chometz* might be found.

One year, as they were searching, the rebbe decided to climb up a precarious clock which was quite high and was not a place where most people put their hands, to say the least. Despite the huge efforts necessary to get to the top of the clock the rebbe would not be deterred from his purpose and slowly scaled the clock.

As he rested for a moment from his exertions, Rav Tzvi Yosef brought up his usual objection that arose during their joint searches year after year. "Rebbe, this clock is surely a place where no one put *chometz*. Why make such efforts to check it when there is no halachic requirement?"

As always, the rebbe didn't reply. Instead, he continued climbing until he reached the clock's face. When he began to check between the hands and the clock he actually found a small object nestled there. It had obviously been placed there on purpose, but what was it? When the rebbe unwrapped this, he found a small roll, indisputably *chometz*!

Overview

Siman 433 Seif 4:

Holes in the walls and protrusions that are not too high or too low must be searched. If they are higher than a person can reach or below three *tefachim* they need not be searched.

- ❖ If one knows he used a hole or protrusion that is lower than 3 *tefachim* it must be searched and homes that have small children must search those areas since there is a concern that the children put down *chometz* below three *tefachim*. (M.B. 19)

Siman 433 Seif 5:

The top of structures that are sloped and as a result are not usable to place things need not be searched even if they are in the house.

- ❖ Structures that are flat and used must be searched and certainly the inside of structures if they are occasionally used for *chometz* or if things are taken from them in the middle of the meal. (M.B. 22)

Siman 433 Seif 6:

A stable does not have to be searched since if there was *chometz* the animals would have consumed it. Similarly, a chicken coop does not have to be searched since the chickens would eat the *chometz*. The middle of a courtyard also does not have to be searched because if there was *chometz* there the birds would have eaten it. These assumptions are limited to where there may be *chometz* there but may not be relied upon if one is certain that *chometz* is there. In Siman 445:3 it is taught that one may throw *chometz* into a place where birds come so certainly it is unnecessary for one to search for *chometz* in such a place unless it is after the time that *chometz* is prohibited.

- ❖ In places where one eats one must check beneath the furniture since it is common for *chometz* to be found under them. (M.B. 24)
- ❖ There is a disagreement how far in advance one has to have been careful regarding *chometz* to rely on the fact that the animals or birds ate it. (M.B. 27)
- ❖ Acharonim rule that one may not throw *chometz* into property that one owns even in partnership but one may throw *chometz* into an ownerless piece of property before the time that *chometz* becomes prohibited. (M.B. 28)

Siman 433 Seif 7:

When there is a hole in the wall between Jews each one must reach in and search as far as his hand will reach and what ever is left must be nullified. A hole in the wall between a Jew and a gentile does not have to be searched out of concern that one will be accused of witchcraft which could put a person in danger.

- ❖ Even if one is certain that *chometz* is present in the hole in the wall beyond one's reach nullification is sufficient. (M.B. 29)
- ❖ One who neighbors a gentile should search the hole during the day of the 14th by the daylight since it will not arouse the gentile's suspicion. (M.B. 30)
- ❖ Even though one whose neighbor is a gentile is not required to search for *chometz* in that place he must nullify it. (M.B. 31)

After a small series of investigations, he found that this roll had been one of the twelve challos with which he would begin the Shabbos meals. He had given this one to his grandson who had wedged it in the clock for safekeeping.

The rebbe, who was ecstatic at this find, turned to Rav Tzvi Yosef and said, "Now you understand why I work so hard to check even places not obligated by the letter of the law. This challah is a case of *chometz* which the owner wants and is not included in his *bitul*. If this is the only thing I find, all of my extra efforts were well worthwhile!"

ספר שולשלת ספינקא, ח"ב, פי ל"א, ע"י שצ"ג