



Overview

Halacha Highlight

Burning one's *chometz*

Rema Siman 445 Seif 1
והמנהג לשרפו

And the custom is to burn it

Shulchan Aruch, following the opinion of Chachamim in the Mishnah in Pesachim (21a), writes that one could burn *chometz*, grind it up and throw it into the wind, or toss it into the sea. Rema comments that the custom is to specifically burn the *chometz*. Mishnah Berurah (סק"י) writes that the custom to specifically burn the *chometz* applies not only if one finds *chometz* on Pesach. Even when destroying *chometz* before it becomes prohibited the custom is to burn it rather than use another method. Sefer Bedikas Chometz U'Biuro (פי"ז הע"ב וג') proves that the *mitzvah* of destroying *chometz* is not fulfilled when the *chometz* is rendered inedible for a dog; rather the *mitzvah* is fulfilled when it is considered completely destroyed. As such when burning one's *chometz* one must make sure that it burns to the point where it becomes coal or ash (ע"י מ"ב סק"י). For this reason he writes (פי"ז סעי' י"ג) that before burning the *chometz* one should make sure that the flame is large enough and strong enough to completely char the *chometz*. If the flame is too small the *chometz* may initially be rendered inedible for a dog but at that point there is no reason to make a larger flame since it is no longer edible there is no *mitzvah* to destroy it.

For the same reason, Poskim (ספר בדיקת חמץ וביעורו שם סעי' י"ד) write that one should avoid pouring a flammable substance onto the *chometz* as one attempts to enlarge or spread the fire. The flammable substance renders the *chometz* inedible and even if it subsequently becomes charred, since it was rendered inedible through a means other than fire it does not comply with the custom to specifically burn the *chometz*. An interesting custom that is mentioned in Teshuvos V'Hanhagos (ח"י ס"י רצ"ב) is that one should specifically burn his *chometz* on his own property or in a utensil that he owns. The basis of this practice is the comment of Ramban (See his commentary to the pasuk Shemos 12:15) that the Biblical obligation to destroy one's *chometz* is when it is on his property.

ing to Rav Yehudah who held that *chometz* must be burned, and according to the sages who held that one may eliminate *chometz* in any way. Although the sages permitted one to break the *chometz* down and throw it in to the wind or water—as we find in Orach Chayim 445:1—merely rendering it inedible to a dog is not enough, since it hasn't been eliminated from the world."

Yet Rav Shlomo Zalman would add that we need not point this out to those who add such material from the outset. "It is somewhat plausible that the halachah views anything added to enhance the flame while the *chometz* is already on fire as part of the act of burning."

הליכות שלמה, פסח, ע"י קל"ח-קל"ט

Siman 445 Seif 1:

How does one destroy his *chometz*? He should burn it or grind it into crumbs and throw them into the wind or throw it into the sea. If the *chometz* is hard and the sea will not destroy it so quickly he should grind it up and then throw it into the sea. The custom is to burn it. It is preferable to burn it during the day similar to *nosar* that is burned during the day. If one prefers to burn it immediately after the search so that it should not be dragged away by a weasel it is acceptable.

- ❖ One should burn the *chometz* until it has turned into coal. (M.B. 1)
- ❖ Some authorities are stringent and require grinding bread into crumbs even if it is not hard before throwing it into a sea or river, therefore, Poskim rule that in all circumstances it should be ground up into crumbs. If, however, it will be thrown into an outhouse it is considered destroyed since no one will benefit from it and it is unnecessary to grind it into crumbs ahead of time even if the bread is hard. (M.B. 5)
- ❖ The custom mentioned by Rema to burn the *chometz* applies even when one burns the *chometz* before the time that it becomes prohibited and certainly if *chometz* is found after the 6th hour or on Pesach. (M.B. 6)
- ❖ Maharil advised burning the *chometz* during the day so that one does not forget to nullify his *chometz*. (M.B. 7)
- ❖ If one has his *hoshanos* they should be used to burn the *chometz*. (M.B. 7)

Stories to Share

Destroying the Chometz

ש"ע ס' תמ"ה, א': "כיצד ביעור חמץ שרפו או פררו וזרקו לי או לרות..."

The custom is to burn the *chometz*, making fires to burn what will be forbidden for the duration of the chag. Obviously it is important for the fire to be strong enough to burn the *chometz*, yet sometimes there are powerful winds and it is difficult to ensure that the *chometz* is completely incinerated. Many people have a very simple solution for this. They add a flammable solution to the *chometz* to ensure that they have a good blaze that will not go out until the material has been entirely consumed.

Although Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach also used such a solution, he would not add it to the *chometz* until much more than a *k'zayis* was completely consumed by the fire alone. He would also warn his students to at least wait until a *k'zayis* burned before adding such a fluid. He explained, "It is only when one waits to add such a solution that he fulfills the *mitzvah* to burn the *chometz*. If one adds the solution immediately, the *chometz* is immediately rendered inedible to a dog and one does not fulfill his obligation with it."

He added, "This represents a lost opportunity both accord-