The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן תמ"ז סעיף י'

Overview

Siman 447 Seif 10:

If the chometz gives a detrimental taste – נותן טעם לפגם—it is permitted on Pesach. Some are stringent about this matter and this is the custom in these countries. Where the custom is to be stringent even a minute amount of chometz that gives a detrimental taste is prohibited.

- According to the stringent opinion נותן טעם לפגם is prohibited for consumption as well as for benefit. (M.B. 97)
- Where there is no established custom one should rule that one who wishes to be lenient will not lose and one who is stringent will be blessed. (M.B. 98)
- One may be lenient to sell the mixture to a gentile if it is only a minute amount of chometz. Pri Megadim concludes that on the eighth day of Yom Tov one may be lenient if both factors are present and the mixture may even been consumed. (M.B. 100)

Stories to Share

Ruined Fuel

ש"ע תמ"ז, י: "נותן טעם לפגם מותר בפסח הגה ויש מחמירין וכן נוהגין"

With the wide availability of electricity, most people do not worry much about what to use for fuel. But not too long ago and it the developing world, this was and still is a serious problem. In certain areas, alcohol was the most accessible cheap fuel available and people used it to light their lamps.

Unfortunately, the alcohol available was grain alcohol. Obviously, on Pesach this presented a potentially huge extra expense. With all the money spent on matzah, wine and other foods, coming up with enough capital to afford lighting oil was prohibitive. One man had a simple solution to this question. Since something which has a blemished taste is permitted on Pesach according to many authorities, he reasoned that if he put something bitter in the grain alcohol, they could use it on Pesach.

When this question reached the Sho'el U'meishiv, however, he disagreed. "When discussing foods, it may be relevant if something has a blemished taste. But how can this have a bearing on what is used as a source of light? After all, the blemished taste has no bearing on using the chometz as a source of light, since he has the same pleasure from the light as he would if its taste was not ruined!"

שו"ת שואל ומשיב, מהדורא קמא, שאלה קמא

But when someone in Yerushalayim many years ago asked this of Rav Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv, zt"l, he permitted the use of such altered alcohol for lamps. "Although the Sho'el U'meishiv forbids this, I do not understand his reasoning. In Shulchan Aruch 442:6 we find that one may use ink that was made of barley on Pesach. The Mishnah Berurah there explains that this is permitted since the additives to the ink certainly render it inedible to a dog. But if we follow the reasoning of the Sho'el U'meishiv, this shouldn't matter. Since the ink is used for writing, who cares if it is edible or not? It was never blemished for writing!"

גלאט, תשס"ו, ע' 31

Halacha Highlight

Nosen ta'am lifgam

Shulchan Aruch Siman 447 Seif 10

נותן טעם לפגם מתר גם בפסח

Nosen ta'am lifgam is permitted even on Pesach

Shulchan Aruch rules that the principle of נותן טעם לפגם applies to chometz as well. The principle of נותן טעם לפגם teaches that when a prohibited food imparts a detrimental taste to a mixture the mixture remains unaffected by the presence of that prohibited food. A related principle that is essential for understanding these halachos is that there is an assumption that taste absorbed into a utensil from food that was cooked in that utensil turns detrimental after 24 hours from when the taste was imparted into the food. The reason נותן טעם לפגם applies to chometz is that Chazal's stringency that chometz prohibits a mixture even at a ratio of 1000:1 is limited to actual chometz that is prohibited. Once chometz has deteriorated to the point that it will be detrimental to the mixture into which it falls, it loses its status as a prohibited food and has no effect on the mixture whatsoever (ע' מ"ב ס"ק צ"ו). Rema cites authorities who adopt a stringent position regarding this matter and reports that this is the custom in these countries. Moreover, in those countries that have adopted the stringent position even a minute amount of chometz that imparts a detrimental taste to the mixture prohibits the entire mixture. The rationale behind this position is that just like chometz at a ratio of 1000:1 is not nullified even though it imparts no detectible taste to the mixture, so too, chometz that will impart a detrimental taste is also prohibited for consumption and for benefit.

There are authorities who maintain that Rema's stringent position is limited to where the chometz became פגום on Pesach itself. However, if the food became פגום even before Pesach it is permitted even if the intermingling did not occur until after Pesach arrived. However, the fact that other Poskim do not mention this distinction in their discussion of this halacha indicates that they do not agree with this distinction and maintain that in both cases Rema's stringency applies. (פסקי תשובות אות י"ב)