



Overview

Halacha Highlight

Siman 453 Seif 4:

Regarding the wheat that one will use to make matzah to fulfill the mitzvah, it is appropriate to guard them so that water does not make contact with them from the time it is harvested or at least from the time it is ground. In a pressing circumstance, it is permitted to purchase flour from the market.

- ❖ The matzah that one eats the first two nights of Pesach should not only be above suspicion that it leavened, rather it is necessary to specifically guard it for the sake of the mitzvah. This obligation is based on the pasuk that states: ושמרתם את המצות. (M.B. 21)
- ❖ In other words, one guards the grain from water from the time it is harvested for the sake of the mitzvah. The custom is to harvest the grain while it is slightly moist. (M.B. 22)
- ❖ The time when it is ground is the time when it is close to water and requires guarding. (M.B. 23)
- ❖ This opinion relies on the Poskim who maintain that the primary guarding is from the time of kneading and onwards. Later authorities note that nowadays that it is common for people to wash wheat kernels and soak them in water one may not purchase wheat flour from the market even in a pressing circumstance. According to many Poskim, one may not even retain such grain in one's home. In the event it was in one's home on Pesach, there is a dispute whether it may be sold to a gentile. (M.B. 24)
- ❖ Wheat kernels may be purchased in the market even if it is not a pressing circumstance since one can guard them from the time that they are ground. Later authorities write that although it is only required to have guarded matzos for the first two nights of Pesach and for the remaining time it is sufficient to have matzah that is not suspected of leavening, nevertheless, the Jewish People are holy and the custom is to guard the wheat from the time that it is ground or at least from when it is kneaded. (M.B. 25)

Shmurah matzah

Shulchan Aruch Siman 453 Seif 4

טוב לשמור שלא יפלו עליהם מים

It is good to watch it so that water does not fall on it

Shulchan Aruch introduces the obligation to guard the wheat from leavening specifically for the sake of the mitzvah. In other words, regarding the matzah that one will eat at the seder to fulfill the Biblical obligation to eat matzah, it is not sufficient for there to be no reason to suspect that the grain leavened. Rather, there is a positive command to guard the grain for the sake of using it for the fulfillment of the mitzvah. Biur Halacha (ד"ה ולפחות) raises the question whether it is permitted to send the grain on a train without a Jew accompanying the grain. He references Sefer Tosefes Yerushalayim who is uncertain about the matter. Although there is no reason to suspect that anyone would exchange this grain for other grain, nor is there concern that rain got onto the grain, nevertheless, there was no one actively guarding the grain and the Torah requires someone to be guarding the grain.

Shulchan Aruch records three opinions about the time at which the requirement to guard the grain begins. The preferred time is from the moment that the grain is harvested from the ground. While attached to the ground and still deriving nourishment from the ground, it cannot become chometz. If one cannot obtain or guard grain from when it was harvested, the next best time is to guard or obtain grain that was guarded from the time that it was ground into flour. Since water mills were often used to grind kernels of wheat, the fear of chometz more poignantly begins at that time. In a pressing circumstance, it is permitted to purchase flour from the market. Mishnah Berurah notes that nowadays one may not purchase flour from the market for use on Pesach since the kernels are washed and soaked in water before they are ground (מ"ב ס"ק כ"ד). Mishnah Berurah relates that many people are stringent and use matzah made from grain that was guarded from when it was ground or kneaded throughout Pesach (מ"ב ס"ק כ"ה).