The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Sun, Mar 19 2023 ■ כ"ו אדר, תשפ"ג
סימן תנ"ג סעיף ה'-ו'

Overview

Siman 453 Seif 5:

Nowadays it is prohibited to moisten wheat or barley.

- Although in the time of Chazal they prohibited moistening barley which is soft [the same is true for oats and rye] and leavens quickly but wheat which is hard and does not leaven quickly may be moistened, nowadays it is prohibited since we are not experts regarding the moistening of grain. (M.B. 26)
- Rambam writes that they would mix the grain with water and grind it whereas Rashi explains that they would soak the grain in water for a bit to remove the bran so that the flour will be fine. The Gaonim prohibited the practice since we are not experts regarding the proper moistening of grain so that it should not leaven. Furthermore, there is a concern that a person may leave the grain in the water for too long a period of time. If one moistened the grain, it is prohibited to eat or derive benefit from that grain on Pesach. However, it is permitted to retain the flour of grain that was moistened shortly before it was ground, but if one moistened barley it may be l'chatchila prohibited to retain on Pesach. (M.B. 27)

Siman 453 Seif 6:

Regarding sacks that are used to store flour throughout the year that one wishes to use for Pesach and will be laundered well, one must first loosen the stitches by the edges or by the patches before laundering.

- The same applies if one stored flour in a sack even once. (M.B. 29)
- Laundering for Pesach must include rubbing it in hot water as well as with ash, and it must be beaten. (M.B. 30)
- The reason is that the flour caught in the stitches will not come out during laundering, and the water will make the flour sticky and could later mix with the Pesach flour. (M.B. 31)
- The same is true regarding the stitches in the hem. Later authorities write that it is preferable to purchase a new sack since sacks are so difficult to launder. B'dieved if one did not undo the stitches before laundering it is not prohibited to use the Pesach flour that was stored inside. (M.B. 32)
- The same is true if one stored Pesach flour in the sack that one wishes to launder and use for Pesach that the stitches must first be loosened. (M.B. 33)

Halacha Highlight

Moistening grain

Shulchan Aruch Siman 453 Seif 5

האידנא אסור לתתת

Nowadays it is prohibited to moisten the grain

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ה') rules that nowadays it is prohibited to moisten wheat or barley before grinding it into flour. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ"ו) explains that in the time of Chazal, the only restriction was not to moisten barley before grinding it into flour, but it was acceptable to moisten wheat before grinding it into flour. The reason for the difference is that barley is softer than wheat. Therefore, there is a concern that if the barley is moistened it might leaven quickly, as opposed to wheat which is hard and there is no concern that if it is merely moistened that it will leaven. There is a disagreement between the Poskim regarding the exact procedure of moistening grain before it is ground. According to Rambam, it involves mixing the grain with water and then grinding the kernels immediately. According to Rashi, the procedure involved soaking the grain in water for a short period of time in order to remove the chaff so that one will produce fine flour. The Gaonim prohibited moistening grain since we are not experts in the process. One concern is that while moistening the grain it may leaven, and another concern is that the grain will remain in contact with the water for longer than the allotted time and will thereby leaven.

Rav Shmuel HaLevi Wosner (שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ד סי' מ"ז) ruled that once water comes in contact with grain even for a moment it may not be used. Even though according to Chazal if the grain is moistened momentarily it should be permitted for use, once the Gaonim prohibited the use of grain that was moistened, the grain is prohibited regardless of how long the grain was in contact with the liquid. Even if the process was automated and the grain was moistened immediately before it is ground, the grain may not be used since it violates the prohibition of the Gaonim.