



## Overview

## Halacha Highlight

### Flour eaten by a mouse

Shulchan Aruch Siman 466 Seif 4

ואסור לאכלו בפסח

It is prohibited to eat it on Pesach

Shulchan Aruch addresses the issues that arise when water falls on flour or a sack of flour. When the flour remains damp one has two options; he could grasp the sack and the effected flour and empty the remaining contents from the bag for use. Mishnah Berurah (ס"יק י"ב) adds that even in this case it is preferable to sift the flour before use. If that is not possible, he rules that it is acceptable to sift out the damp clumps of flour and what does not get caught in the sifter is permitted. He then notes that this leniency applies while the flour remains damp but once the damp flour dries, sifting is no longer effective since the dried clumps will crumble and intermingle with the rest of the flour thereby prohibiting the entire mixture. At that point the only option is to sift the flour to remove whatever clumps remain and the remainder may be put aside for use after Pesach.

Mishnah Berurah (ס"יק י"ח) presents the debate amongst authorities concerning a sack of flour that a mouse nibbled at. The first opinion distinguishes between whether the mouse nibbled at the flour before Pesach or on Pesach. If it occurred on Pesach the entire mixture is prohibited since we are concerned that the mouse nibbled from many places so that the affected area cannot be removed. If it occurred before Pesach the flour could be sifted and the remainder could be retained for use after Pesach or sold to a gentile. Other authorities maintain that it is acceptable to grasp the area that was affected to separate it from the unaffected flour and this is effective even to consume the flour on Pesach. Chok Yaakov (ס"ק ט"ט) explains that although it is true that a mouse's saliva triggers the leavening process but regarding flour there is no reason for concern since its saliva only touches that which it eats. Consequently, whatever remains did not come in contact with the mouse's saliva and that is the reason it is permitted.

one transported the sack from one place to another or if it was bitten in many places this option is not effective. (M.B. 18)

- ❖ If the dampness dries on Pesach it prohibits the mixture regardless of the ratio of the prohibited flour. Later authorities write that this *seif* applies when we know that it became wet from water but if the moisture may have come from fruit juice one could be lenient and consume it on Pesach after it is sifted even though it dried on Pesach. However, if one could easily obtain other flour, one should not rely on the *sfek s'feika* to consume it on Pesach and it should be saved until after Pesach. The same is true regarding liquids about which the *Poskim* debate whether it is categorized as water or fruit juice. (M.B. 20)
- ❖ Shulchan Aruch did not rule that it must be disposed and accordingly it is even permitted to sell it to a gentile except for the amount that is prohibited. According to Rema the custom is to burn the mixture (See 467:10). (M.B. 12)

### Siman 466 Seif 4:

**If water fell on flour or if a sack of flour became damp, one must grab the damp part in the sack until one empties the other contents of the sack. If this is not possible, one must sift the flour and what remains is permitted. This is effective as long as the flour is damp but once it dries, sifting is no longer effective since the pieces crumble and intermingle with the other contents and it is prohibited to eat it on Pesach. The only option is to sift it and retain it for use after Pesach. If it dried on Pesach it is prohibited to retain possession of it.**

- ❖ One must also remove the flour that is in that place by grasping the flour together with the sack around the damp area and a bit beyond that area. (M.B. 11)
- ❖ *L'chatchila* one should also sift the flour that remains. According to some this is true when the dampness is on the bottom of the sack but is not effective if the water fell on the flour on top of the sack and the only option is to sift it. If this occurred before Pesach there are grounds to be lenient *b'dieved* even if one did not sift it. (M.B. 12)
- ❖ The part that became damp will remain inside the sifter and the flour that passes through did not come in contact with the water. If the water fell on Yom Tov and it did not remain the amount of time it takes to walk a *mil*, one may give it to a gentile since it did not yet leaven. (M.B. 14)
- ❖ If the flour dries sifting is ineffective even if this occurred before Pesach. However, the option to grab the damp place still applies is effective even if it dries on Pesach but it is still proper to first sift the flour. (M.B. 15)
- ❖ Even though there are 60 times non-leavened flour so that it is nullified before the onset of Pesach, nevertheless, when Pesach begins it reawakens and prohibits the mixture with even the minutest amount. Although generally, "liquid" mixtures do not become reawakened, in this case the concern is that the crumbs will not fully intermingle in the flour and remain distinct. (M.B. 16)
- ❖ Some maintain that it may not be consumed even if it was baked before Pesach whereas Pri Chadash contends that it is a circumstance of intermingling "liquids" and does not reawaken on Pesach but it should be baked before Pesach. Magen Elef adds that one may take some flour and consume it before Pesach so that we can assume that it was the *chometz* that was consumed before Pesach and one may rely on this position when facing a circumstance of loss. However, one should use other *matzos* for the *mitzvah* and the same is true for any case where a *sfek s'feika* generates a leniency. (M.B. 17)
- ❖ If mice bit a sack of flour and it is evident that the flour had been damp and dried, if this occurred on Pesach it is prohibited but if it occurred before Pesach one may sift the flour and retain it until after Pesach or sell it. Many other authorities disagree and contend that grasping the damp area is effective even in this case and one could consume the sifted flour on Pesach. It is appropriate to adopt a stringent position but if