

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON HILCHOS CHALLAH

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

The following is a discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

QUESTION: Must challah be separated from all types of flour?

ANSWER: Flour derived from the five species of grain - wheat, barley, spelt, rye and oats - requires the separation of challah. Rice, corn and soy flour are exempt.

QUESTION: Does the type of liquid used when making the dough have any affect on the obligation to separate challah?

ANSWER: When flour is mixed with any amount of water, one is obligated to separate challah with a blessing according to all poskim(1). Flour mixed with fruit juice or with eggs only, requires hafroshas challah without a blessing(2). When flour is mixed with olive oil, wine or bee's honey there is a difference of opinion. Some require separating challah with a blessing(3) while others require separating challah without a blessing(4).

QUESTION: Must challah be separated only when baking bread, or when baking other items as well?

ANSWER: Thick dough from which cake or cookies will be baked requires challah separation if a minimum of 10 cups of flour are used. If a minimum of 16 cups of flour are used, the blessing is recited when separating the challah. [Other ingredients do not count towards the minimum amount of flour.]

Thick dough which will be fried or cooked requires hafroshas challah without a blessing(5).

A liquid batter which will be fried or cooked is exempt from challah. If it will be baked, it requires hafroshas challah with a blessing(6).

QUESTION: May the designated piece of challah be removed with a fork or a knife?

ANSWER: It is permitted to remove the designated piece of challah with any utensil but it is not recommended. As previously explained, the piece of challah is forbidden to be eaten. Since dough tends to stick, some crumbs may remain on the utensil and possibly render it [or other dishes washed along with it] non-kosher when washed with hot water later on.

When the hot, burned piece of challah is removed from the oven, it should definitely not be removed with a utensil(7).

QUESTION: While sitting at the Shabbos table, a woman realizes that she forgot to separate challah from her challah loaves. What should she do?

ANSWER: It is prohibited to separate challah on Shabbos or Yom Tov(8) unless the dough was made on Yom Tov(9). Accordingly, there is nothing that can be done(10) and the challah loaves may not be eaten(11). [If she realizes her oversight during bein hashmashos, and neither she nor the shul where her husband is davening has recited kabbolas Shabbos, she may still separate challah [even if she has already lit Shabbos candles], as long as the family has no other challah loaves for Shabbos(12).]

If this oversight occurred outside of Eretz Yisrael, however, the challah loaves could be eaten so long as the lady intends to separate challah after Shabbos from whatever will remain of the challah loaves she had baked. She must follow this procedure(13):

She must make sure that a small piece [e.g., one slice] remains from the loaves she had baked; Separate a designated piece from that remaining slice after Shabbos or Yom Tov is over(14). That piece is then burned like any other separated challah.

No blessing is recited over this type of challah separation(15).

QUESTION: What can be done if the designated piece of challah, after being separated - regardless of whether a blessing was recited or not - gets mixed in with the rest of the dough?

ANSWER: If the designated piece of challah is mixed in with dough which is 101 times greater in volume than the designated piece, then the entire dough may be baked and eaten(16).

If the dough is not 101 times bigger than the designated piece, the dough may still be eaten - but only after the challah piece, which is forbidden to eat, is "removed" from the dough. This is done by halachically annulling the piece of challah so that the dough no longer contains the forbidden challah piece. The woman [or her husband(17)] recites the following in the presence of a bais din of any three adult males(18): "I regret that I designated that piece of dough as challah, and had I known that I would regret it, I would not have designated it for challah." The bais din can then repeal her designation as they do with any other vow(19). Another piece of dough is then separated for challah.

The same procedure would apply if the woman realized after baking her challah loaves that she mistakenly baked the designated piece of challah with them, or if somehow the designated piece got mixed up with any other food.

When the challah loaves or other food are needed, this procedure may be followed on Shabbos or Yom Tov as well(20).

QUESTION: Is flushing the designated piece of challah down the toilet the same as burning it?

ANSWER: No(21). The proper method for disposing of the challah is to burn it. [We have previously explained that under extenuating circumstances only, some poskim permit wrapping it and throwing it in the garbage]. It is prohibited to feed it to one's pet or to derive any benefit from it(22).

QUESTION: Is it a mitzvah for ladies to bake challos on erev Yom Tov as it is on erev Shabbos?

ANSWER: Yes. It is considered a form of honoring the Yom Tov(23).

QUESTION: A woman prepares dough with the required amount of flour [16 cups] in order to recite the blessing, then divides the dough in two - half she bakes immediately while the other half is frozen to be baked at a later time. Does she separate challah?

ANSWER: This issue is debated in the poskim(24). It is recommended, therefore, to separate challah but not to recite the blessing(25)

FOOTNOTES

1. Y.D. 329:8.
2. Taz Y.D. 329:9. In practice, however, a dough should not be prepared unless it contains either water, wine, olive oil, milk or bee's honey.
3. Pischei Teshuvah 329:2; Aruch ha-Shulchan 329:3.
4. Oral ruling heard from Harav M. Feinstein (quoted in Oholei Yeshurun, pg. 58) based on Bais Hillel Y.D. 329:9.
5. Shach Y.D. 329:4.
6. Y.D. 329:2.
7. Harav S. Shapiro.
8. Mishnah Berurah 339:26. B'dieved, if she mistakenly separated challah on Shabbos or Yom Tov, the food may be eaten. If however, she was aware that it is forbidden to do so and she did so anyway, the food is forbidden to be eaten - Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 339:26.
9. If the dough was prepared on Yom Tov, challah is separated with a blessing but the dough is not burned until after Yom Tov is over. Once the piece is set aside, it may no longer be moved, since it is muktzeh - Mishnah Berurah 506:29.
10. If this occurred on the first night of Pesach or Sukkos when it is a Biblical obligation to eat a

k'zayis of matzah or bread, a solution can be found. A rav must be consulted.

11. A possible solution is to prepare on Yom Tov another batch of dough and then separate challah from the new dough for both. See Rama O.C. 506:3 and Mishnah Berurah for the details.
12. Mishnah Berurah 261:4 and 28. Outside of Eretz Yisrael, though, this should not be done, since in the Diaspora it is permitted to separate challah after Shabbos, as detailed in the next paragraph.
13. Rama O.C. 506:3.
14. Rama Y.D. 323:1. If she forgot to separate challah from more than one dough, she must follow the same procedure with each dough.
15. Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 42, note 57).
16. Rama Y.D. 323:1.
17. Aruch ha-shulchan 323:14.
18. While her husband may not be one of the three, her children, her father and other relatives may - Y.D. 334:57.
19. Rama Y.D. 323:1. While some poksim do not agree with this procedure (see Taz 323:2), most poksim concur with the Rama's ruling, see Chochmas Adam - Sha'arei Tzedek 14:6; Pischei Teshuvah 3; Aruch ha-Shulchan 14.
20. Sha'arei Teshuvah O.C. 341:1.
21. Chochmas Adam - Sha'arei Tzedek 14:34.
22. Rama Y.D. 322:5. A kohen, however, may derive benefit from it while burning it - Rama Y.D. 331:19
23. Rama O.C. 242:1; 529:1.
24. See Y.D. 326:2, Beiur ha-Gra 7 and Pischei Teshuvah 2; Chazon Ish Y.D. 198:3.
25. Leket ha-Omer 7:3; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 42, note 45).

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*The series is distributed by the Harbotzas Torah Division of Congregation Shomre Shabbos,
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