



Separating Challah Early

One must separate *challah* from dough once the dough has been rolled and kneading is complete. The *Mishnah* (3:1) taught that one is allowed to snack from that dough prior to that point. We have also learnt that if one attempts to separate *challah* from flour, the separation is ineffective. The *Mishnah* however teaches that one can (or should) separate *challah* as soon as the water has been added. We shall try to understand this ruling.

The *Bartenura* explains that even though the main *mitzvah* is to separate *challah* from fully formed dough, the *Chachamim* instituted this practice to best ensure that the separated *challah* is *tahor*.

The *Mishnah* however adds a condition and there are two versions of the *Mishnah*. The first is that it is “as long as there is not five quarter *kav*”. According to this version, there is a concern that there is not a volume of flour remaining that has not yet mixed with the water. The reason is that the separated *challah* would satisfy the requirement for the remaining flour, which in turn would require *challah* be separated from it once it mixes with the water. According to the second version, the condition is that “as long as there is five quarter *kav*”. According to this reading, the requirement is that when separating the *challah* early, the flour that has mixed with the *challah* must be a volume that requires the separation of *challah*.

The *Bartenura* continues by citing the *Yerushalmi*, that one can stipulate that they are separating *challah* now for all the dough, sourdough and remaining flour such that it will be *challah* once the dough is all formed. Making this stipulation circumvents the requirement that (according to the first reading) there be less than five quarter *kav* of flour remaining when he separates *challah*. That is because the separated portion only becomes *challah* for everything once it is all kneaded through.¹

The *Yerushalmi* explains that this was the practice taught to the *kohanot*. *R' Chaim* explains that people would bring the *kohanot* their flour, since the *kohanot* knew how to separate the *challah* in a way that would ensure the *challah* would remain *tahor*. The *Mishnah Rishona* notes that there is a risk that the separated portion might get burnt prior to the end of kneading which would mean that *challah* would need to be separated from the *tameh* dough undermining the decree. He answers that the only real concern was the dough becoming *tameh*, since it is being handled by many people. The separated portion however can be set aside carefully such that there is no real concern of it being comprised.

One might then ask, that if it only becomes *challah* at the end, it will not be considered as being separated *min hamukaf* (in close proximity to the dough) which is requirement when separating *Challah*. The *Mishnah Rishona* however cites that *Rash* that since it was separated and designated *min hamukaf*, even though it attains the *kedusha* of *challah* later, it is sufficient.

One might however also ask, how can one designate the portion as *challah* for flour that is not yet dough? It should be considered a “*davar she'lo ba leolam*”. The *Tosfot R' Akiva Eiger* however answers that this case is different. Since one can continue kneading the rest of the dough, it is not considered as *mechusar maaseh* – lacking a critical step. It is as if the requirement has been fulfilled and “*be'olam*”, and the declaration works.

The *Derech Emunah* (*Bikurim* 8:19) however notes that even though the *Mishnah* (see also *Rambam* 8:2) indicates that this is the preferred practice, that was because, as we have explained, they wanted to ensure the *challah* remains *tahor*. Nowadays, since all dough is *tameh*, the *challah* should be separated at the optimal time – once kneading is completed.

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¹ *R' Chaim* (on *Yerushalmi*) explains that whether there still must be five quarter *kav* of flour mixed with water when the *challah* is separated is the subject of debate between *R' Yossi* and *R' Yonah*.

Revision Questions

חלה א' ר' – ג' ב'

- When is one required to separate *challah* for *challot todah* and *rekikei nazir*? (א' ר')
- Is a baker required to separate *challah* if he prepares many portion of dough, each smaller than the minimum measure, to be sold separately? (א' ר')
- What is *isat kelavim* and when must one separate *challah* from it? (א' ח')
- What nine laws does *challah* share with *trumah*? (א' ט')
- If one brings one of the five grains into Israel and uses it to make dough, do they need to separate *challah*? (א' ב')
- According to *R' Akiva* if one take one of the five grains from Israel to outside Israel and use it to make dough, do they need to separate *challah*? (א' ב')
- When would one be required to separate *ma'asrot* from a plant on a boat that originated from outside Israel? (ב' ב')
- Can one separate *challah* when not wearing clothing? (ב' ג')
- Explain the debate regarding what one should do if they are unable to bake bread in a state of purity. (ב' ג')
- If one prepares a lot of dough, each being less than the minimum size that obligates one to separate *challah*, when do we say that they combine to obligate one to separate *challah*? (ב' ד')
- If one separates a portion of the flour as *challah* what is the status of that flour, and what is the status of the dough made out of the remaining flour? (ב' ה')
- What is the minimum amount of flour used in dough that requires one to separate *challah*? (ב' ו')
- When does bran combine with the flour to complete this minimum amount? (ב' ו')
- How much of the dough must be separated for *challah*? (ב' ז')
- In which two cases is the measure described in the previous question reduced? (ב' ז')
- Explain the debate regarding whether one can separate *challah* from *tahor* to cover the requirement for *tameh* dough. (ב' ח')
- From what point in the bread-making process does one need to separate *challah*? (א' ג')
- Does one need to separate *challah* from dough made from *meduma* produce? (ג' ב')

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2 October ז' תשרי	3 October ח' תשרי	4 October ט' תשרי	5 October י' תשרי	6 October יא' תשרי	7 October י"ב תשרי	8 October י"ג תשרי
Chalah 3:3-4	Chalah 3:5-6	Chalah 3:7-8	Chalah 3:9-10	Chalah 4:1-2	Chalah 4:3-4	Chalah 4:5-6

