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## Why do *Bedikat Chametz*?

The first *perek* of *Pesachim* deals with the prohibitions surrounding *chametz*. The first *Mishnah* specifically deals with the *mitzvah* to perform *bedikat chametz* (searching for *chametz*) on the evening before *Pesach* – “*ohr la’arba asar*”.

The *Rishonim* discuss the reason behind the obligation to perform *bedika*. *Rashi* says the purpose is to avoid transgressing the prohibition of “You shall not see...or find *chametz*”. The problem *Tosfos* and other *Rishonim* have with *Rashi*’s explanation is why there is a need for *bedika* if there is already a biblical obligation to perform *bitul chametz* – to nullify the *chametz*. The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 4b) describes the process of *bitul* as a sincere declaration that all *chametz* in one’s possession is null and worthless. *Bitul* alone would be effective to exempt one from the biblical transgression of “you shall not see...” If so, according to *Rashi* what is the point of the laborious and time consuming *bedika*?

The *Ran* explains that *Rashi* would agree that in theory you could avoid the transgression of “you shall not see” by *bitul* alone, however, he was concerned that people would perform an insincere *bitul*. Therefore there is a *mitzvah* to do *bedika* as an extra precaution.

Several alternative reasons for the *bedika* are offered in *Tosfos*. The *Ri* explains that the reason is not related to seeing the *chametz* but to do with eating it. If you just do a mental “removal” of *chametz* you may come to eat it if you find a particularly enticing piece. He anticipates the question of why we are more severe with *chametz* than with other forbidden foods or mixtures like meat and milk and *trumah*. He answers that there is

a greater concern because *chametz* is permitted all year so people are more accustomed to eating it and may do so out of habit.

This debate between *Rashi* and *Tosfos* comes up again in their explanation of the next *Mishnah*. The *Mishnah* cites the opinion of the Rabbis who require one to do *bedika* on the night of the fourteenth, failing that to do it on the day of the fourteenth, failing that during the “*mo’ed*” and if you still have not done *bedika* you must do so after the “*mo’ed*”.

*Rashi* explains that “during” and “after” the *mo’ed* refers to during the sixth hour and after the sixth hour on the fourteenth. *Tosfos* is bothered by the way *Rashi* interpreted the language of the *Mishnah* particularly because *R’ Yehuda* in the same *Mishnah* refers to the sixth hour as “the time of burning” not as “the *mo’ed*” and surely the simple reading of the *Mishnah* appears to be in contrast with *Rashi*’s explanation.

The *Tosfos* therefore explains according to the simple reading of the *Mishnah*, that the *mo’ed* refers to the festival of *Pesach*. The reason you must do the *bedika* even after *Pesach* is because you are forbidden to eat *chametz* which a Jew owned during *Pesach*. This explanation is consistent with *Tosfos*’ interpretation of the *Mishnah* that the reason for *bedika* is to avoid eating *Chametz*. *Tosfos* admits that *Rashi* was forced to interpret the *Mishnah* in the way he did because he holds the reason for *bedika* is to avoid transgressing “you shall not see”. Consequently, it would be pointless to do *bedika* after *Pesach*. Therefore “after the *mo’ed*” can only mean before *Pesach* and after the sixth hour.

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**Revision Questions**

עירובין י" ד-ט"ו

- On what condition can a *kohen* working in the *beit ha'mikdash* on *Shabbat* place a bandage on his finger? (י"ד: ט"ו)
- What did they place on the ramp (*kevesh*) to prevent the *kohanim* from slipping? (י"ד: ט"ו)
- Explain the debate regarding the preferable means of removing a dead *sheretz* found in the *beit hamikdash* on *Shabbat*. (י"ט: ט"ו)
- List the two opinions regarding where in the *beit ha'mikdash* it was appropriate to apply the solutions described in the previous question? (י"ט: ט"ו)

פסחים א' א'-ב' ה'

- When does one search for *chametz*? (א' א')
- What does one use to aid in his search? (א' א')
- Explain the opinions of *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding the extent that one must search a storeroom full of barrels. (א' א')
- Why does the *Mishnah* state that "one need not be concerned that a weasel came and drag away the *chametz*"? (ב' א')
- Till when should one search for *chametz*? (Include both opinions) (ג' א')
- Detail the schedule for *erev Pesach* (including cut off times) according to *R' Meir* and according to *R' Yehuda*. (ד' א')
- According to *R' Yehuda* what was the sign in the *beit ha'mikdash* that indicated the time on *erev Pesach* that one could eat *chametz*? (ה' א')
- What does *Rabban Gamliel* permit to be eaten during the fifth hour? (ה' א')
- According to *R' Channina* which two object were burnt together even though it effectively increased the level of *tum'ah* in one of the objects? (ו' א')
- What case does *R' Akiva* add similar to the previous question? (ו' א')
- What does *R' Meir* try to deduce from the above described opinions of *R' Channinah* and *R' Akiva*? (ז' א')
- Who argues with *R' Meir* on this point? (ז' א')
- After the time on *erev Pesach* when it is forbidden to eat *chametz*, can one use *chametz* to fuel their oven? (ח' א')
- Describe the two opinions regarding what constitutes *biur chametz*? (ח' ב')
- What is the *pasuk* cited as the source for the prohibition in gaining benefit from *chametz* after *Pesach*, that was owned by a Jew during *Pesach*? (ח' ב')
- If an *Yisrael's* *chametz* was in the property of a *Nochri* as a collateral for a loan during *Pesach*, can he derive benefit from it after *Pesach*? (ט' א')
- What is the criterion that *Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel* gives for whether one must search for *chametz* on top of which rubble has fallen? (ט' ב')
- What must one pay if they ate *trumah chametz* on *Pesach* deliberately? Unintentionally? (ט' ב')
- Which grains can *matzah* be made out of (for the first *kezayit*)? (י' א')
- Can one use *matzah* made from *demai* produce to fulfil his obligation of eating *matzah*? (י' ב')

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**Next Week's Mishnayot...**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
1 <sup>st</sup> January א' טבת	2 <sup>nd</sup> January ב' טבת	3 <sup>rd</sup> January ג' טבת	4 <sup>th</sup> January ד' טבת	5 <sup>th</sup> January ה' טבת	6 <sup>th</sup> January ו' טבת	7 <sup>th</sup> January ז' טבת
Pesachim 2:6-7	Pesachim 2:8-3:1	Pesachim 3:2-3	Pesachim 3:4-5	Pesachim 3:6-7	Pesachim 3:8-4:1	Pesachim 4:2-3

