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Making Eggs and Onions on Shabbos | Beshalach 5785

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Making Eggs and Onions [Eyer mit Tzvibel] on Shabbos Reasons for the Minhag

1. There is a minhag in Klal Yisroel to eat eggs with onions at the Shabbos day seuda. Some reasons given for this are: eggs are eaten by mourners, so we eat them to commemorate the mourning of Moshe Rabbeinu, who died on Shabbos (פמ"ג סי' רצ"ב); the moon did not taste like onions, so we eat them on Shabbos (טעמי המנהגים אות שס"ח).
2. Some say preparing this dish according to halacha with care to avoid melachos potentially involved on Shabbos shows our honor for the Shabbos (הגרשו"א, פסקי תשובות סי' רפ"ט הע' 52).

With Meticulous Adherence to Halacha

3. Making eggs and onions on Shabbos in a mutar way requires thorough knowledge of the halachos regarding many melachos.
4. **When to make it.** Some people make their eggs and onions before Shabbos to avoid many potential shailos (כך נהג החזו"א). Nevertheless, several tzaddikim (הבעל דברי חיים ועוד) preferred making eggs and onions themselves by the Shabbos table, and did not even rely on their family members because of the many shailos involved (כ"ק מרן גאב"ד ירושלים, "רבינו הגדול אמרו" עמ' ר"ח). They also had mystical reasons for doing this.
5. **Ruach ra'ah.** Another reason these tzaddikim did not make it erev Shabbos is because it is dangerous to eat peeled eggs or onions that were left overnight (see Issue 16). Although some are meikel on Shabbos (ibid.), and despite the fact that there is no danger when other ingredients, e.g., oil or salt, are mixed in, these tzaddikim still preferred making the dish on Shabbos.

Rinsing Eggs in Water

Borer

6. **Removing an egg from water.** A bowl of water with eggs inside is not considered a mixture since the eggs are large and distinct. Thus, it is not an issur of borer to pour the water out of the bowl (שביתת השבת מלאכת בורר בבא"ר אות כ"ה).
7. **Dirty egg.** If an egg has dirt or chicken droppings on it, some poskim say there is no issur of borer to rinse it right before the seuda since it cannot be eaten otherwise (שו"ת אג"מ או"ח ח"א סי' קכ"ה). (קצות השלחן סי' קכ"ה בדה"ש סקט"ז, הגרשו"א שש"כ פ"ג הע' מ"ח).
8. Others say since the dirt got on the egg in a natural way – and they are therefore considered "mixed" – and borer with water is like borer with a utensil, one may not rinse it under a faucet (הדו"א, (חוט שני ח"ב פכ"ה סק"ו אות ג', שו"ת מנח"י ח"ה סי' ל"ח).

Found Eggshell in Egg Salad

9. If one finds a bit of shell or dirt in his egg salad, he may not remove it by itself due to the issur of borer. He must take some of the salad out along with the shell or dirt (מ"ב סי' שייט סקס"א).

Mocheik

10. If an egg has words or a letter printed on it, one may not rinse it in water due to the melacha of mocheik [erasing]. Also, care should be taken when peeling the egg not to break a letter or image (קצות השלחן סי' קמ"ד בדה"ש סוף אות ו', כף החיים סי' ש"מ סקל"ד).

Raw Egg

11. **Muktza.** Raw eggs are not muktza (כמבואר בשו"ע ש"י ס"ב). This is because they can be added to a dish and are drunk raw to clear the voice (כמבואר בשו"ע ש"כ סל"ח) [which is not an issur of refuah on Shabbos (שם)]. Even though many people do not usually use eggs for these purposes, these uses are common enough to make eggs not muktza.

Peeling Eggs and Onions

Borer

12. One may only peel eggs, onions, or vegetables on Shabbos close to the seuda (רמ"א סי' שכ"א סי"ט, שו"ת אג"מ או"ח ח"ד סי' ע"ד בורר אות ח').
13. **Close to the seuda.** L'chatchila, it is best to prepare them as close as possible to when they will actually be eaten. However, it is fine as long as it is close to the seuda, i.e., within an amount of time before the seuda that is normal to prepare food for the upcoming seuda. One may not occupy himself with other things between preparing these foods and the seuda. Thus, a woman should not prepare these foods if she plans on davening after finishing but before the seuda.
14. When preparing for many people, e.g., for a sheva brachos, one may use as much time as necessary to prepare, even starting hours before the seuda (שעה"צ סי' תרי"א סק"ט, ארוחת שבת פ"ג אות נ').
15. Even if one wrongfully prepared these foods too long before the seuda, the food does not become assur. Although some poskim hold that when the issur of borer is done on food, the food becomes assur (פמ"ג סי' שייט א"א סק"א והוא בביאה"ל ריש סי' שייט), the general psak is that the food is not assur if there are other factors to allow a kula or other meikel opinions (ארוחת שבת פ"ג הע' קנ"א).

Muktza Shells

16. Eggshells and onion skins are muktza (שו"ע סי' ש"ח סכ"ז). Thus, l'chatchila one should peel them over the garbage so they fall straight in. Alternatively, one could peel them and throw them out right away without first putting them down.
17. If this is not feasible, one can place them on a plate or bag which already holds a non-muktza item, e.g., edible food, a spoon, etc., so that he does not have to carry the shells alone directly to the garbage to throw them out.
18. If one did not do this, he may carry them to the garbage to throw them out in any manner if they are in a spot that bothers him, e.g., on the kitchen counter or certainly the Shabbos table. This is based on the halacha of "geref shel re'i" [a filthy item] (מ"ב שם ס"ק קט"ו).

Mincing Eggs and Onions

Eggs

19. Since eggs do not grow from the ground, there is no problem of tochein [grinding] to mince them on Shabbos (שו"ע סי' שכ"א סי"ט), even a while before the seuda (מ"ב סקל"א). This is the common minhag. However, some poskim hold non-grown foods should also only be minced close to the seuda (ח"א כלל י"ז נשמ"א סק"ג, חזו"א) (או"ח סי' נ"ז סוד"ה סימן שכ"א).
20. Everyone agrees one should not use a utensil designated for this purpose, e.g., a grater, or egg masher, since that is the way it is done during the week (שו"ע שם סי"י). One may mince eggs in a normal way with the prongs of a fork.
21. One may use an egg slicer on Shabbos; it is not a problem of "uvda d'chol" either since it is just several blades connected together (הגרשו"א שש"כ פ"ו ס"ג הע' י"ב) or because it just cuts the eggs into slices but does not mince them (שו"ת אג"מ או"ח ח"ד סי' ע"ד) (טווחן סק"ד).

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Chopping Onions

22. One who chops a vegetable very finely is chayav for tochein (שׂוּרֵי עֵיב (שׂוּרֵי עֵיב). This is only true if he chops it for later consumption; it is mutar to chop it right before eating (רמ"א שם) or close to the seuda (המ"ב סקמ"ה), as defined above (12, 13).
23. However, some poskim hold one should not chop vegetables very finely even when chopping them close to the seuda, (ב"י, מג"א בשם), (ש"ג, מ"ב שם וביאור"ל שיי"ט ס"ד ד"ה הייב). Nevertheless, those who chop onions finely have poskim to rely on if they do so close to the seuda (מ"ב שם).
24. **Size of pieces.** Some say chopping a vegetable into pieces slightly larger than they are chopped during the week is enough to not be called "fine" (הוה"א או"ח סי' נ"ז ד"ה והנה). This would seem to depend on what each person usually does during the week. Others say "chopping finely" is objectively defined as chopping vegetables into the smallest sized pieces they are normally cut with a knife; into slightly larger pieces would not be called "fine" (מ"ב הרמב"ם). (ירושלים, תשנ"ג ח"ב סי' קפ"א).
25. According to this, one who does not chop vegetables very finely during the week would not need to chop them any differently on Shabbos (שור"ת אור לציון ח"ב פמ"ז סקמ"ה).
26. If, during the week, one normally cuts an onion along its length, width, and height, it would seem it suffices on Shabbos to cut it only along its width and height since that results in slightly bigger pieces. This is true despite the fact that since onions are round, some of the pieces will be the same size as usual.
27. Some say chopping an onion finely a while before the seuda could likely be a chiyuv chatas, and it is assur to eat the food even b'dieved (מ"ב סקמ"ה בשם הח"א כלל י"ז ס"ב). Nevertheless, others hold since there are many aspects of this that are topics of machlokes among the poskim, the food is not assur b'dieved (ערוה"ש סי"ט), (שביתת השבת טוהן פתיחה סק"ה). Thus, if this was done accidentally, or without knowing the halacha, one who is meikel has poskim to rely on (קצות השלחן סי' קכ"ט הע"ה).
28. **Cutting with a utensil.** The heter to chop onions close to the seuda is only when it is done by hand, with a knife. One may not use a utensil designed for this purpose, e.g., a grater or V-slicer/mandoline (מ"ב סקמ"ה).

Salting Eggs and Onions

Salting Eggs

29. It is not a problem of koveish [preserving/pickling] to put salt – even a lot – on eggs on Shabbos (שׂוּרֵי עֵיב שׂוּרֵי עֵיב) since it is not normal to pickle eggs, and salt does not change them that much (מ"ב סק"ח).
30. This is only true if they will be eaten that day. One may not salt them for later (שׂוּרֵי עֵיב שם ס"ה) since that resembles the melacha of ibud [tanning hides] and koveish (מ"ב סק"ח). It is considered for later if one is planning to use them for a different seuda, even on the same day (מג"א וט"ז), if it will be a long time after the first seuda (פ"מ). Some say it is only assur to salt them for later if one puts them away for after Shabbos (כך נוטה הא"ר, ביאור הגר"א וביאור"ל שם ד"ה אסור).

Salting Onions

31. One may not salt vegetables which are commonly pickled (שׂוּרֵי עֵיב (שׂוּרֵי עֵיב). Also, one may not salt anything which is not eaten raw and only eaten salted, e.g., onions, garlic, or pickling cucumbers (מ"ב סק"ג). Therefore, one may not put salt on onions alone.
32. One may put salt on onions if he will pour oil over them right afterward since the oil diminishes the salt's strength (מ"ב סק"ד). Still, it is better to add the oil first and the salt afterward (קצות השלחן סי' קכ"ח בדה"ש סק"ג; וזו חוט שני ח"ב פ"ל סק"ג).

Losh

The Melacha of Losh [Kneading]

33. The melacha of losh is mixing a substance composed of dry, separate pieces with a liquid or watery food to combine them into a single mass (see Issue 349, where we discussed the main concepts of the melacha of losh).
34. **Vegetables with liquid.** The Mechaber implies he agrees with the opinion that the issur of losh does not include mixing crushed vegetables with a liquid – with a shinui – since they do not join to become a single mass. A shinui would include mixing gently if they are normally mixed vigorously (שׂוּרֵי עֵיב שׂוּרֵי עֵיב), mixing in a crisscross pattern, using a finger to mix, or mixing a bit at a time. The Rama paskens accordingly (שם).

35. Some say one may not combine vegetables with a liquid into a thick mixture, even with a shinui (ב"י בש"ע שם).

Mixing Eggs with Oil or Mayonnaise

36. Accordingly, the poskim deliberate whether or not it is an issur of losh to make an egg salad on Shabbos by mixing minced eggs and oil or mayonnaise into one mass.
37. **Reasons for heter.** There are several reasons to allow this, which many people rely on. Some say it is mutar because it is not like kneading since the mixture does not become a cohesive paste like dough (ע"פ שי מהרש"ל). Additionally, mixing a liquid with eggs that were boiled is merely enhancing a food, not kneading (הוה"א בב"ה"ל סי' שכ"א ד"ה שמא, הגרש"ז א ש"כ פ"ח הע"ה פ"א).
38. Another reason, based on the Tehila l'Dovid (סקמ"ב), is that mixing a small amount at a time is mutar even without a shinui, and making eggs for one meal is considered a small amount (ש"ת מנח"י). Also, egg salad is normally made right before the seuda so that it will not go bad. It is thus considered "yad al yad," which is a manner of eating, not kneading (סקמ"ב). Finally, only a little oil is added for taste, not for kneading and combining (ש"ת ויען יוסף סי' קפ"ז).
39. In view of all these reasons, one who prepares eggs and onions with oil or mayonnaise on Shabbos without any shinui has poskim to rely on. Many great talmidei chachamim and Chassidische gedolim do this.
40. **Reasons for issur.** On the other hand, many poskim were concerned that mixing eggs with oil or mayonnaise involves the melacha of losh. They only made egg salad in line with the rules of permissible losh, as follows:
41. **Eggs with oil.** When adding oil – a liquid – to eggs, it is best to do so before Shabbos (וכשי"ה בש"ע), unless it will go bad before the seuda or there was no time to do so (ארה"ת שבת פ"ז הע"ה ג"ט). In these cases, one may make egg salad on Shabbos with the following conditions:
42. When adding oil to eggs on Shabbos, it is best to change the normal order, i.e., one should first pour the oil, and then add the eggs (ט"ז שם סק"ב ומ"ב סק"ח) [a shinui in the adding of the liquid helps since this case is not true kneading]. Then, he should also combine them with a shinui, e.g., in a crisscross pattern.
43. **Eggs with mayonnaise.** When adding mayonnaise to eggs, there is no need to put the mayonnaise in first since it is not a liquid like oil. Still, one should make the above shinui when combining the eggs and mayonnaise (שביתת השבת הקדמה למלאכת לש סק"ז).

Memacheik and Boneh with Food

Memacheik

44. There is no issur of memacheik [smoothing] in smoothing out food on Shabbos since the food can be eaten without it (רמ"א שכ"א). Strictly speaking, one may smooth a food out for nice presentation even if it is not generally smoothed out when eaten; however, one who is machmir will get a bracha (רמ"א שם וביאור"ל שם).
45. Similarly, one may make grooves on an egg salad with the prongs of a fork for presentation purposes.

Boneh

46. **Rounded scoop for eggs.** Some poskim say it is an issur of boneh with food to use a rounded scoop specifically designed to create a nice, smooth surface for egg salad, ice cream, or the like (קצו"ש). (סי' פ' סכ"ה, ח"א כלל ל"ט ס"א, ש"ת שבט הלוי ח"ו סי' כ"ט).
47. Others say the issur of boneh with food is only when sticking foods together tightly. A round scoop of egg salad is not stuck together in any way and would thus be mutar (דעת תורה סוף סי' שכ"א). (ש"ת חשב האפוד ח"ב סי' ע"ז, ש"ת מגדנות אליהו ח"ג סי' ס"ז אות נ"ט בשם המנח"י).

Continuation of Losh and examples next Gilyon י"ח

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