

- **Korech non-proof**

1. **תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קטו עמוד א**
מאן תנא דשמעת ליה מצות אין מבטלות זו את זו - הלל היא. דתניא: אמרו עליו על הלל שהיה כורכן בבת אחת ואוכלן, שנאמר על מצות ומררים יאכלהו. אמר רבי יוחנן: חולקין עליו חביריו על הלל. דתניא: יכול יהא כורכן בבת אחת ואוכלן כדרך שהלל אוכלן - תלמוד לומר על מצות ומררים יאכלהו - אפילו זה בפני עצמו וזה בפני עצמו. מתקיף לה רב אשי: אי הכי, מאי אפילו? אלא אמר רב אשי: האי תנא הכי קתני: יכול לא יצא בהו ידי חובתו אלא אם כן כורכן בבת אחת ואוכלן, כדרך שהלל אוכלן - תלמוד לומר על מצות ומררים יאכלהו - אפילו זה בפני עצמו וזה בפני עצמו. השתא דלא איתמר הלכתא לא כהלל ולא כרבנן - מברך על אכילת מצה ואכיל, והדר מברך על אכילת מרור ואכיל, והדר אכיל מצה וחטא בהדי הדדי בלא ברכה, זכר למקדש כהלל.

2. **ערוך השולחן אורח חיים סימן תעה סעיף ז**
וא"כ נוטלין המצה השלישית כדי לקיים בה מצוה ושמין המרור בין המצה וכורכן יחד

3. **רבינו חננאל מסכת פסחים דף קטו עמוד א**
שהיה כורך המרור על המצה
• Proves that Maror was leaves, but says nothing about matzah

4. **The Thick and Thin of the History of Matzah, By: ARI Z ZIVOTOFISKY and ARI GREENSPAN**
While the root korekh is often used to mean "wrap," it can also have the meaning of "surround." For example, a walled city is called a "krach" because it is surrounded by a wall, and the hard binding surrounding a book is a krikhah. Thus, korekh could involve surrounding the *maror* with hard matzah, much as the city is surrounded by a hard wall. The haggadah section of korekh offers no proof one way or the other as to the kind of matzah used.

- **Mold**

5. **שולחן ערוך אורח חיים הלכות פסח סימן תמו סעיף ז (פסחים דף ז)**
מצא פת בפסח בביתו ואינו יודע אם הוא חמץ או מצה, מותר אפילו באכילה דאזלין בתר בתרא; ואם הוא מעופש הרבה, שאי אפשר לו להתעפש כל כך משכנס הפסח, אז ודאי הוא חמץ. ואם עברו מימי הפסח שנוכל לתלות שנתעפש משכנס הפסח עד עתה, אם אנו נוהגים לאפות בפסח פת חם בכל יום תולין להקל אפילו הוא מעופש הרבה, שאנו תולים לומר בכל יום אפה פת חם ונתנו עליו ולפיכך הרבה להתעפש.

- **Size**

6. **טור אורח חיים הלכות פסח סימן תעה (מצוטט ברמ"א)**
א"א הרא"ש ז"ל וכתב ונוהגין באשכנז וצרפת לעשותן מעשרון זכר ללחמי תודה שהיוצא מבית האסורים מביא תודה

7. **משנה ברורה סימן תעה ס"ק מו**
(מו) ונהגו לעשות וכו' - עיין בספר בית מאיר שמפקפק על המנהג ובכמה מקומות כהיום נשתקע המנהג:

8. Thick and Thin

Even using the smallest opinion of the size of an isaron would mean that a thin matzah made from a 1/3 of an isaron would be a matzah for the record books many, many feet in diameter, something not realistic as it would not fit in an oven. This custom indicates that their matzah had to be significantly thicker than any modern matzah. While this proves that they used thick matzah in the past, it does not definitively prove that they used soft matzos. There are individuals today who make three hard, thick matzos from one isaron. Furthermore, the *Lehem ha-Panim* in the *Beit ha-Mikdash* were each made from 2 isarons (Vayikra 24: 5), were allowed to be up to a tefah thick, were matzah, and yet according to *lehem ha-panim* expert Prof Zohar Amar, they were most likely not soft and pliable, but rather like thick, edible crackers.

9. The Pillow Proof, Thick and Thin

The *Be'ir Haitev* (OH 473: 19) quotes the Maharshal (Lithuania, d. 1573) as suggesting to put the afikoman between the "kar and keset" i.e., under the pillow, until he is ready to eat it. With current hard matzah such action would result in eating matzah meal for the afikoman. Clearly the Maharshal was familiar only with soft matzah. This is actually an undeniable proof that soft matzah was generally used in the past.

- **Thickness**

10. **שולחן ערוך אורח חיים הלכות פסח סימן תס סעיף ז**
אין עושין סריקין המצויירין דהיינו לצייר בפת כמין חיה ועוף; אבל כל מה שעושים אותו במסרק כדי שלא יתפח, וכן מה שמנקבין המצות, מותר, ומי"מ טוב למהר לעשותן שלא להשהות בהם. הגה: ויש לעשות המצות רקיקין, ולא פת עבה כשאר לחם, כי אין הרקיקין ממהרין להחמיץ.

11. Thick and Thin

However, the lack of a specific thickness in the Rema's statement might lead one to believe that the Rema is advocating paper-thin cracker-like matzos similar to what is used today. That is not the case. The *Beir Heitiv* (460: 8) cites the *Beit Hillel* (YD 97 [page 35a in 5451 edition]; died 1690) that the custom was to make matzah thinner than normal bread and to

make them an *etzbah* (finger) thick, i.e., thicker than even today's soft matzah. The Pri Megadim (*Eishel Avraham* 460: 4; Rav Yosef ben Meir Teomim 1727–1792) says an *etzbah* is the width of a thumb, and that this was for the matzah that was ground to make matzah meal. Apparently, his matzah was hard and thus the finger-thick matzah could not realistically be eaten so he assumes that such thick matzah was ground, implying that there was thinner matzah that was made to be eaten. As will be seen, having more than one style of matzah was not uncommon.

• Freshness

12. ערוך השולחן אורח חיים סימן תנח ע"ף ג

ויותר נלע"ד משום דזה ידוע שבזמן הקדמון לא היו אופין כל המצות קודם הפסח אלא היו אופין בכל יום מימי הפסח פת ליום זה עד שהטור כתב לדבר חידוש וז"ל ואני ראיתי בברצלונה מהמדקקים שהיו אופין כל מה שצריכין למועד מקודם המועד שאם יתערב עמו משהו מחמץ יתבטל קודם איסורו עכ"ל וזהו כמנהג שלנו וכתב זה לדבר חידוש ולכן כשהיו אופין בכל יום ולאכול פת חמה א"כ למה יגרע מצת מצוה שלא יאפו אותה סמוך לאכילה והיינו אחר חצות ומה גם שכתבו דבמרור יש ארס והחמימות מבטל להארס [א"י שם] ולכן אפו סמוך ללילה וגם משום חביבה מצוה בשעתה וגם כדי שיהנו מהמצה בערב דפת חמה טוב הרבה יותר מפת צוננת דהם אפו מצות עבים לא כשלו

13. Eruv, Thick and Thin

The earliest source we know of that mentions making an *eruv* for an entire year is *Halakhot K'tsuvo*, usually attributed to the 8th-century Rav Yehudai Gaon.⁸ There it is stated⁹ that if one wants to make an *eiruv* on *erev* Pesah for the whole year, the hakham should take from each and every household a handful of flour, knead and bake it into a cake or two, making them exceptionally hard so that they will not spoil and can be stored. This bread was then placed in one of the houses. While this source does not call the baked item "matzah," it was prepared on *erev* Pesah and thus indicates that already over 1200 years ago the concept of very hard, longlasting, cracker-like, kosher le-Pesah bread existed. It also seems to indicate that their standard matzah was not this hard cracker-like substance.

In 15th-century Austria the Leket Yosher (p. 145 in 2000 ed.) wrote that the *eiruv* was made from matzah, was made specifically on *erev* Pesah, and was huge with a hole in the center and hung in the winter residence of Rabbi Yisrael Isserlein (the Trumat ha-Deshen). He also reports that it once happened that the *eiruv* broke (*nishbara*) because it got moldy and Rav Isserlin first used bread for one Shabbat and then made matzah to last until the next Pesah. Mahari Veil (15th-century Germany; Hilkhot Mahari Veil in *Shu"t Mahari Veil, siman 4*) also calls the *eiruv* bread (which he insisted be placed in a house and not shul) "matzah." The conclusion seems inescapable that in 15th-century Austria and Germany, standard matzah was dry enough to theoretically remain edible for an entire year if it was hung in the air....

The most surprising evidence comes from Yemen. Rav Yosef Kafich wrote¹⁴ that in Yemen the city rabbi would make an *eruv* on *hol ha-moed Pesah* for the whole city for the year. He would bake several small loaves [קטנות חלות] of matzah and put them in a high window in the shul. And he testifies that such was the practice of his grandfather in the late 19th century.

This called for an experiment because Yemenite Jews to this day all bake soft matzah. Using a thread we hung a standard pita for three months to see what would become of it. It quickly dried out but never became moldy. It remained completely edible such that upon taking it down we found that it could be eaten as is and was simply like a dried cracker. Alternatively, because in the old days bread was often eaten dipped, we dipped it in thick porridge and it became soft and took on (almost) its original constitution.

14. Two Types, Thick and Thin

By mid-18th century it seems that in Ashkenaz there were both thick and thin matzahs. The Adnei Paz¹⁷ explains that thick matzahs need a hotter oven than do thin ones. Therefore the thick matzah, called "rib matzah" [because it will be grated with a *rib-eizen* (hand grater) into matzah meal], should be baked first. He concludes by noting that unfortunately, new bakers have started baking the thin matzah first and bake the thick one when the oven has already begun to cool. Again, it is clear that they had more than one type of matzah.

15. Conclusions

The data presented above paint a picture of several factors playing a role in yielding the type of matzah used today. It is likely that in the Talmudic period, matzah was thicker and softer and resembled standard bread baked by being smacked on to the side wall of an oven and being baked there. Removing it after it is fully baked yet before it falls off to be burned in the coals below is a skill termed by the gemara *redias hapas*. All of this is impossible with hard matzah. In the period of the rishonim there was a move, for halakhik reasons, to bake longer-lasting matzah, probably resulting in thinner and harder matzah. The process was driven by the halakhik humra to bake all matzah before Peach to take advantage of *bitul*. This is because on Pesah itself *hametz* is not *batel* (annulled) by a majority of non-*hametz* bread but prior to Pesah it is *batel* and thus this approach alleviated the concern of a tiny bit of *hametz* in the matzah....

The march towards every drier and thinner matzah continued unabated. A sociological factor has been suggested as a partial explanation. The social upheavals that were part of the impetus that led to the introduction of machine matzah might have had a role in the thin matzah. As the country population migrated to the huge urban centers in the early 18th century, people no longer baked the small quantities a family needed. Baking became centralized and done in large quantities. In Ashkenazik lands as this happened, there was supposedly a move to bake "pre-stale" matzah, i.e. very thin, hard, and dry.²⁸ However we have found nothing in the written record to support this claim and as was seen, in early-14th century Spain they were already baking all their matzah before Pesah and it was lasting throughout the holiday. Not only did the matzah 700 years ago last a week, many places were already using matzah as an *eiruv* and thus they had matzah that was edible after a year. Urbanization in the last 300 years cannot be seen as a significant factor in the introduction of

modern, thin, pre-stale matzah if the matzah they had was already lasting a year. Nonetheless, it cannot be argued that in Europe the production of matzah become centralized while in places such as Yemen it remained until today a task done in each home.

Rather, it seems that the final stage in the evolution of the crackerthin matzah was because of another halakhik *humra*: the concern that with thick matzah it is more difficult to prevent and to ascertain chimutz. As seen above, the Ashkenazik authorities in the 17th–19th centuries were concerned about thick matzah becoming *hametz* and made a concerted effort to produce thinner and thinner matzah from drier and drier batter. This became easier to do thanks to the powered machines that could knead very dry batter. But the process took time and for centuries, probably the 17th–19th, there were two types of matzah being made: thick to be grated into matzah meal and thin to be eaten. The super hard, thin matzah such as is used today can simply not be rubbed against a grater (*rib-eizen*) the way a potato is ground. Eventually, possibly thanks to commercial production of matzah meal and probably in the early 20th century, the ultra-thin, cracker-like matzahs that are ubiquitous today become the sole matzah. This historical process seems to have occurred in both Ashkenazik and Sepharadik lands, with the single, significant exception being Yemen where soft matzah continued to be baked daily, and the Yemenite Jews continue this until today. The development of the modern thin, hard matzah thus seems to have been driven solely by halakhik concerns rather than sociological or practical issues.

- Can Ashkenazim Eat it?

16. Assur



Rabbinical Council of Victoria
Religious Leadership for the Jewish Community
ועד הרבנים דויקטוריה

2 Nissan 5771
6 April 2011

ב"מ"ד

President: Rabbi Yaakov Glasman
Executive Director: Ari Morris

RCV STATEMENT For Immediate Release

It has been brought to the attention of the Rabbinical Council of Victoria (RCV) that, despite it having expressed grave concerns over the availability of soft "laffa"-style *matza* before Pesach last year, this product has once again become available to the public for purchase and consumption. The RCV therefore wishes to reiterate its stance on this matter and, following consultation with local *kashrus* experts, strongly recommends against the consumption or ownership of these *matzos* during Pesach. All member rabbis of the RCV have been appraised of the *halachic* issues involved. Should consumers seek further information we urge them to consult their *rov* or *kashrus* authority as a matter of priority.

Additionally, please be advised that the supplier of these *matzos* has stated on his website that Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv שליט"א, a leading *halachic* authority in Israel, inspected these *matzos* and stated that *matzos* of this nature would be perfectly kosher for Pesach for Jews of all backgrounds and traditions. Rav Elyashiv was subsequently approached about this matter and has expressly requested that the following statement be publicized in his name:

אסור לתת חכשר למצות רכות לקהילות אשכנז כי זו פירצה. ביחודות אשכנז אין על זה מסורת ואף פעם לא נתנו לאפשר אכילת מצות רכות.

(Translation): "It is forbidden to give a *hechsher* to soft *matzos* for Ashkenazi communities because this is a breach (of tradition). There is no tradition among Ashkenazi Jewry (to consume soft *matzos*) and they have never allowed the eating of soft *matzos*."

The above statement by Rav Elyashiv relates to the issue of breaking a long-standing tradition in a community, which is quite apart from the *halachic* problems associated with the production of such *matzos*.

Wishing the community a kosher and joyous Pesach.

Rabbinical Council of Victoria

