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בס"ד

I-4

Blood Spots in Eggs – General

While preparing a dish for cooking often one may be unsure if he has to check for blood spots. In addition, in the manufacturing of products, companies receive eggs in various forms such as whole, frozen, and dried.

Does the *halacha* of checking for blood spots apply today? If it does, who checks to see if there are blood spots in the eggs?

This issue will be discussed at length below.

Background

In years past, most eggs came from fertile hens, whose hormone levels stimulated more egg production. Today, this is not the case. The hormones are stimulated artificially, the chickens themselves are not fertile and the eggs will not develop into chickens. About a hundred years ago, chicken farms became very common. On a chicken farm only chickens are raised. The chickens only produce eggs and they are not killed for consumption. Chickens are used for the production of eggs produce eggs every day of the year.

The *Issur*

It is forbidden for one to eat blood found in an egg. The reason is not related to the *issur* of eating blood,¹ but rather that blood in an egg is an indication that a new embryo is forming. It is forbidden to eat an embryo.²

Blood Spots

In the times of the *Gemorah*,³ blood appeared in eggs because of two reasons: 1. The egg had been fertilized and a chicken embryo was being produced. 2. An irregularity in the hen causes a small amount of blood to be deposited in the egg.

¹ Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 66:1, Levush 6.

² Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 66:8, Levush 6, Yechaveh Da'as 3:57.

³ Chullin 64b.



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In the United States, the government requires that Grade A and Grade AA eggs be checked for blood spots, and they go through a procedure called candling. Done in a dark room with the egg held before the light, it detects blood spots. Therefore, the chance of finding a blood spot is rare.⁴

The *Halacha*

The *Gemarah* in *Chulin*⁵ quotes the *halacha* of blood spots in eggs. There is a discussion in the *poskim* as to the exact parameters of this *issur*. Most say that any blood found in the egg because of fertilization is *ossur* and the egg must be discarded.⁶ Some say it depends on where the blood is found: only in the yolk (yellow part of the egg), in the albumin (egg white) or in both the yolk and the albumin.⁷

The *Rama*⁸ says because of the difficulty with this *halacha*, the custom is that there is no difference where the blood is found, the entire egg is forbidden.⁹

Checking Eggs Today

The above discussion was referring to blood spots which might be from a fertilized egg, and where there is a possibility to transgress an *issur* by eating the egg. However, the *Shulchan Aruch*¹⁰ says eggs which are from a coop where there are no roosters may be eaten, even if the hen sat on the eggs for many days. Nonetheless, one has to remove any blood spot which is found.¹¹ The *Shach*¹² says that even the blood spot is permitted to be eaten since this egg was not fertilized. The *Gr'a* says doing so is an *issur d'rabanan*.¹³

⁴ Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society 40.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Refer to Shulchan Aruch 66:2-5.

⁷ Shulchan Aruch *ibid*.

⁸ 66:2.

⁹ Refer to Aruch Ha'shulchan 66:15-16.

¹⁰ 66:7, see Tur, Pischei Teshuva 3, Chuchmas Adom 29:12. Refer to Mesechtas Chullin 64b.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² 66:14.

¹³ 66:12.



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The *Rama*¹⁴ says that if one is making a dish with eggs, he should check the eggs to make sure that there is no blood present in the egg. The *Aruch Ha'shulchan*¹⁵ says this is the custom in all of *klal yisroel*. The idea of checking is not according to the letter of the law but is a custom.¹⁶ If it is hard for one to check (i.e. night) one may cook the egg without checking it for blood.¹⁷

Many *poskim* say that today the *metzius* is that at egg farms there are no roosters. So chickens do not mate and produce eggs which are fertile. Therefore if one does find a blood spot in an egg, all he has to do is throw out the blood spot and he may eat the rest of the egg.¹⁸ When checking for blood spots, one should crack the egg in a cup where the egg can be seen from all sides.¹⁹

The opinion of *Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l*²⁰ says that really one can remove the blood spot and the egg can be eaten, but he spoke to a farmer and he said that they can mix eggs together- hatching eggs and table eggs. Therefore, since eggs are cheap and one does not have a big loss, one should be stringent and discard the entire egg.²¹ This *teshuva* was written in 1957 where the *metzius* may have been different than it is today. This being the case, it would seem that *Horav Moshe zt"l* may agree that one can be lenient.²² When one does check, he should check for a red or dark spot. A brown spot is permitted.²³

¹⁴ 66:8, see Ben Ish Chai Teharos 2:8, V'Yan Yosef Y.D. 3.

¹⁵ 66:32, see Kaf Ha'chaim 66:41.

¹⁶ Vayicorech Dovid Y.D. 2:92.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Yechaveh Da'as 3:57, Yabea Omer Y.D. 2:5, Minchas Yitzchok 4:56, Opinion of Horav Sheinberg Shlita quoted in Divrei Chachumim page 185:20. See Be'er Moshe 5:129. Refer to Aruch Ha'shulchan 66:32. See Star-K in Kashrus Kurrents.

¹⁹ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. The Blood spot which one may see is caused by the rupture of a blood vessel on the yolk surface during egg formation.

²⁰ Igros Moshe Y.D. 1:36. This is the opinion of Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita (Hakhel January 2006 daily e-mail). Refer to Hechsheiros K'halacha page 21:footnote 14 who quotes the opinion of those who are stringent even today. This is the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita as well (Kovetz Kovetz Bais Aron V'Yisroel 46:page 98). The *metzius* in *Eretz Yisroel* is the same as in the United States (Kovetz Bais Aron V'Yisroel 46:page 98).

²¹ Bais Avi 4:115.

²² Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society *ibid*:footnote 18.

²³ Darchei Teshuva 66:23.



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The opinion of some *poskim* is that one should throw out the entire egg.²⁴

In farm areas where eggs are sold at the farm or on the side of the road, it is possible to have eggs which can contain a fertilized egg. In this case it is best to check the eggs for blood spots.²⁵

Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l has the custom when eating hard boiled eggs to peel off the white and check the surface of the yolk for blood spots, which would appear as black spots.²⁶

Since eggs are inexpensive, rather than trying to remove a blood spot, some people still throw out the whole egg.²⁷

Cooked

As mentioned before, according to the *Rama*, before using eggs in food, one should check to see if there are any blood spots. However, if it was not done, it is permitted to eat a hard boiled egg which was not checked beforehand since we can rely on the fact that most eggs are not fertilized.²⁸ One who notices a blood spot on the food after it is cooked should remove the blood spot. This can occur when egg yolk is used to glaze *challah* or bread.²⁹ The food is nonetheless permitted. One is permitted to eat a fried egg without checking for blood spots. This was the custom of the *Arizal* as well. This is permitted because most eggs do not contain bloodspots.³⁰

²⁴ Teshuvos V'hanugos 1:821, 2:384, Divrei Shalom 3:134, Chai Ha'Levi 4:45. Refer to Chai Ha'Levi 4:45 if blood is found on a shell of an egg. Some say the reason for the stringency is because one may come to be lenient in a place where it is common to have fertilized eggs (Divrei Shalom *ibid*).

²⁵ Vayivorech Dovid 2:92, Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society *ibid*.

²⁶ Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society *ibid*:footnote 27. This is not required (This is the opinion of Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita (Hakhel January 2006 daily e-mail).

²⁷ Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society *ibid*:footnote 21. However, six reasons are stated there why one may not have to check eggs altogether today. Refer to OU document I-184 where the opinion of Horav Shachter Shlita is quoted as saying that the women throw away any egg with a blood spot.

²⁸ Rama 66:8, Aruch Ha'shulchan 66:32. Some had the custom to check hard boiled eggs but soft boiled eggs were not checked (Orchos Rabbeinu 1:page 239:11, 3:page 70:8).

²⁹ Aruch Ha'shulchan 66:32.

³⁰ Ben Ish Chai Teharos 2:8.



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Boiling three Eggs in the Shell

People would have a separate egg pot or cook three eggs at a time so if one of them would have a blood spot, it is *butel b'rov* and all the eggs would be permitted.³¹ This is not necessary today, since the chance of finding a blood spot from a fertilized egg is very minimal since the eggs are not fertilized.³² Based on this, there is no reason to have a separate egg pot.³³

Commercial Production

As established above, checking for blood spots is a custom. Accordingly, if one is cooking for hundreds of people (i.e. a caterer or a school,) or it is at dark,³⁴ or if food is made in a factory setting where checking is very difficult, one does not have to check the eggs for blood spots.³⁵

Frozen Eggs – Powdered Eggs

The *poskim* discuss whether one is permitted to purchase frozen or dried eggs from a non-Jew who did not inspect the eggs for their *kashrus* status.³⁶ The opinion of some *poskim* is to be lenient, and the custom seems to be lenient.³⁷

Utensils

Since today eggs are not fertilized, some still have the custom not to use the utensil which an egg that was not checked for blood until twenty-four hours have passed, and after that time no *hagala* is required.³⁸ One who put an egg with a blood spot in a hot frying pan does not have to *kasher* the pan.³⁹

³¹ Teshuvos V'hanugos 2:384, Chai Ha'Levi 4:48, Vayivorech Dovid 2:92. See Minchas Shlomo 2:63. The Chazon Ish ruled that if one were to find a blood spot in one of the eggs the pot requires *hagalah* (Orchos Rabbeinu 3:page 71:9).

³² Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, OU document I-203, see Igros Moshe Y.D. 1:36, Bais Avi 4:115, Vayivorech Dovid ibid:page 317, Kovetz Bais Aron V'Yisroel 46:page 95. Refer to Orchos Rabbeinu 3:page 70:9 who says from the Steipler zt"l that he did *hagala* if three eggs were cooked together even if only one had a blood spot.

³³ This is the opinion of Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita (Hakhel January 2006 daily e-mail).

³⁴ Darchei Moshe 8, OU documents H-61, I-87. If one has a light he should use it to check (Shevet Ha'Levi 2:22).

³⁵ Vayivorech Dovid ibid. Some say this would also apply to eggs which are fertilized (Vayivorech Dovid ibid).

³⁶ Minchas Yitzchok 2:68. See Shevet Ha'Levi 2:30.

³⁷ Har Tzvi Y.D. 73, Chelkes Yaakov Y.D. 14.

³⁸ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see OU document I-203, Igros Moshe O.C. 3:61, Be'er Sarim 1:28, Opinion of Horav Fisher zt"l quoted in Hechsheiros page 324:footnote 73. Refer to Orchos Rabbeinu 3:page 70:9 who says from the Steipler than he did *hagala* if cooked three eggs together even if only one had a concern of finding blood.

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Other Blemishes Found in an Egg

Greening- when eggs are boiled for too long, the yolks will often turn green. This is not an indication of anything and may be eaten.⁴⁰

³⁹ This is the opinion of Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita (Hakhel January 2006 daily e-mail).

⁴⁰ OU document H-61. In regard to protein spots see OU document I-184 where the opinion of Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita is that protein spots are permitted. (There is a very slight chance of finding protein spots in white eggs, and if one does it is white). One who can not tell the difference between a blood spot and a protein spot is permitted to eat the egg (Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita as expressed in OU document I-184:page 3).



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Oles Yitzchok 2:153. Kinyan Torah 2:7, Shevet Ha'kehusi 3:219, Torah Leshma 210, Chazon Ish Y.D. 26.