PESAH: Regular Matsa vs. Matsa Shemura

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Matsa (in English “Matzah”) is a special unleavened bread made of a flat dough. The dough is prepared with flour and water, without yeast. The flour normally comes from wheat, but technically, the Matsa could also be made from barley, oats, rye or spelt’s flour. The whole elaboration process from the time the flour gets in contact with water until the Matsa is baked must take less than 18 minutes.

There are different types of Matsot.

Today we will learn the differences between regular Matsa and Matsa Shemura

The difference between these two Matsot has to do with the level of supervision (shemira), more specifically, the point at which the supervision begins.

REGULAR MATSA

The supervision of the processing of this Matsa begins from the moment the flour is produced. It is necessary to ensure that the flour which will be used for the Matsot be kept in a dry place (humidity makes the flour Hamets). Furthermore, the water to be used to bake the dough should be at room temperature level. Warmer water, for example, would accelerate the process of fermentation. No dough, even a small piece, might be left unattended while baking the Matsot. Any piece of dough left for 18 minutes is Hamets mixed into the Matsot might affect the validity of the Matsot. The machines should be cleaned after each production from residues of dough, water, etc. These are some examples of the supervision of the Regular Matsa.

MATSA SHEMURA

In addition to all the rules for regular Matsa, in the elaboration of Matsa Shemura the grain is supervised from the time of harvesting. For example: the wheat kernels are carefully examined to make sure that there are no grains with a split or grains that are sprouting. In those cases the process of Himuts would be triggered by a minimum moisture.

The grain is also supervised when it is stored and

transported, making sure that is not affected by humidity.
All this extra supervision process involves an increased need for labor, and this is why the Matsa Shemura is substantially more expensive than regular Matsa.
Certainly, both Matsot are Kasher for Pesah. But the use of Matsa Shemura is indicated particularly for the first two nights of Pesah (in Israel, the first night), when we say the Berakha ‘*al akhilat Matsa*. Why? Because having Matsa Shemura during the nights of the Seder is a practice that we do following the pasuq (Ex 12:17) □□□□□ □□ □□□□□□ “and you shall guard (=supervise) the unleavened bread”.
During the other days of Pesah, technically, there is no obligation to eat Matsa Shemura, because during the rest of Pesah there is no formal commandment to eat Matsa, but only to refrain from eating Hamets