

# KASHRUT.COM<sup>©</sup>

*The Premier Kosher Information Source on the Internet*

---

[HOME](#) | [PASSOVER](#) | [CONSUMER](#) | [COMMERCIAL](#) | [TRAVEL](#) | [ZEMANIM](#) | [LINKS](#) | [ARTICLES](#) | [RECIPES](#) | [E-MAIL LIST](#)

---

## Does Medicine need to be Kosher for Pesach?

*By Rabbi Shmuel Silber  
KOF-K Educational Administrator*

Reprinted with permission from the KOF-K, this article originally appeared in the KOF-K Kashrus Newsletter, 2002.

The Gemara in **Pesachim 21b** states: Rava said, “if you burn the chameytz (before the time of prohibition), it is permitted to derive benefit from it even on Pesach.”

Why is this so? This is due to the fact that the chameytz has deteriorated to the point that even a dog would not eat it, it loses its identity as chameytz – this is called *nifsal mey’achilas kelev* (even a dog would not eat it). Rava explains that one is permitted to derive benefit from this type of item even on Pesach (the Torah prohibited deriving benefit from chameytz, because this item is so deteriorated it loses its classification as chameytz). The question is that when Rava allows you to derive benefit, would he also say that you could eat the item itself? This is a dispute between the **Ran** and **Rosh** in Pesachim. The **Ran** explains that even if you want to actually eat the item it is permissible. The **Rosh** says that although you may derive benefit from this item, you may not actually eat it. What is the basis of this dispute? The **Ran** seems to hold that once the food is considered *nifsal mey’achilas kelev* – that title imposes a level of objectivity on the item. Therefore, objectively this item is not chameytz. Therefore, even if I choose to eat it, that does not change its objective status. The **Rosh** seems to understand that if you eat it, then you elevate and restore this item to its previous level of importance. How can you say it is *nifsal mey’achilas kelev* if you yourself are eating it! Therefore, the food will revert back to its previous chameytz status. This is the concept called “*achshivey*” (from the word chashuv-important, by eating this item you give it importance and it once again becomes chameytz).

This conversation has **Halacha L’Maaseh** (practical) ramifications in the area of medications. Let us take a case of where the medicine that you want to take has chameytz (assuming it is not for any serious ailment – if it is consult your Rabbi); can you take this medicine on Pesach? Perhaps your first reaction would be – “well even if it has chameytz, it is *nifsal mey’achilas kelev* – a dog wouldn’t eat it. Therefore, it should be permissible to take this medicine.” However, then you remember the **Rosh** – who says that even if it is *nifsal*, you are still not allowed to eat (because if you do, you have elevated its former title of chameytz, achshivey). So perhaps I would day that you cannot take the medicine?

**Rav Moshe Feinstein** in his **Igros Moshe OC II: 92** explains that concept of “*achshivey*” only applies when one engages in a normative act of eating. How do you define a normative act of eating? Either “*ha’naas garon*” – it tastes good or “*ha’naas mey’ayim*” – it satiates. Tablet medicines posses neither of these qualities, therefore Rav Moshe says that even if it does contain chameytz (the chameytz will not really be considered chameytz since it is *nifsal mey’achilas kelev*), there will not be a problem of “*achshivey*”, since you are not halachically eating the medicine. However, liquid medicines would pose a problem since by swallowing them; you are eating it in a normal fashion and depending on what it tastes like, can provide *ha’naas garon* – pleasant taste. One should consult a Rav for a ruling on liquid medicines for Pesach.

---

Phone: (781)784-6890

URL: " <http://www.kashrut.com/> "

Fax: (781)784-6890

E-mail: [ajms@kashrut.com](mailto:ajms@kashrut.com)

**Arlene J. Mathes-Scharf**  
Food Scientist - Kosher Food Specialist

Scharf Associates  
P.O. Box 50  
Sharon, MA 02067

Comments to [webmaster@kashrut.com](mailto:webmaster@kashrut.com)

© Copyright 2005 Scharf Associates