

Voice OF THE VAAAD

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BEE SWEET BEE KOSHER

As *Rosh Hashanah* approaches, honey is one of the first things that the kosher consumer puts on the shopping list. The well-established custom of dipping challah and apples in honey is etched in our minds from our youngest years.¹ This article will discuss why bee honey is accepted as being kosher while other bee products are not. We will also explore other uses and messages *Chazal* ascribed to honey.

It would seem that honey should not be accepted as a kosher food item. A bee is not counted among the permitted creatures to eat; why would its by-product be accepted? In fact, the *Mishna*² states a rule that anything discharged from a non-kosher species is also considered non-kosher.

The *Gemara*³ brings two opinions as to why bee honey is permissible. The first explanation is that honey is not an actual secretion. The bee doesn't "make" honey, but only functions as a carrier and processor to bring forth the honey.

To understand this, a brief entomological overview of how honey is formed is in order. Leaving the hive, a foraging bee collects sugar-rich flower nectar⁴, sucking it through its proboscis (mouth) down into its proventriculus ("honey stomach"). There, salivary enzymes and proteins from the bee's hypopharyngeal gland are added to the nectar to

begin breaking down the sugars. The forager bees then return to the hive where they regurgitate and transfer the semi-processed nectar to the hive bees. The hive bees then use their proboscis and honey stomachs to ingest and regurgitate the nectar. The hive bees work together as a group with the regurgitation and digestion for as long as 20 minutes, passing the nectar from one bee to the next, until the product reaches the honeycombs in storage quality.⁵ It is important to point out that the honey is never absorbed by the bee. It is transformed into a honey product by the enzymes found in the bee's saliva.⁶

The other explanation given by the *Gemara* to permit honey despite the bee being a non-kosher species is based on an interpretation of the *passuk* "However, this you may eat from among all the flying insects..." The above two opinions are cited in the *Shulchan Aruch*.⁷ The halachic difference between them is if we will accept honey produced by other insects to be kosher as well. According to the first opinion of the *Gemara*, honey produced by any insect would be kosher. However according to the latter opinion, only bee honey is deemed kosher by the *Torah*.⁸

Honey is not the only bee product available for human consumption on the market. Of late, a product called royal jelly has been in demand for its

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putative health benefits. What is royal jelly? Royal jelly is secreted by glands located in the head of worker bees and is fed to all bee larvae, whether they are destined to become drones (males), workers (sterile females), or queens (fertile females). After three days, the drone and worker larvae are no longer fed royal jelly, but queen larvae continue to be fed this special substance throughout their development.⁹ Some companies have marketed royal jelly as a dietary supplement for humans, but the European Food Safety Authority has concluded that the current evidence does not support the claim that consuming royal jelly will have any purported health benefits in humans. In the United States, the Food and Drug Administration has taken legal action against companies making unfounded claims of health benefits to market royal jelly products.¹⁰

Is royal jelly kosher? Unlike honey, royal jelly is a glandular secretion. Therefore, based on the first reason cited above from the *Gemara* that permitted honey specifically because it is **not** considered a secretion of a bee, royal jelly would be prohibited. Similarly, according to the latter opinion of the *Gemara*, the scriptural exception to permit a by-product of bees was specifically honey, not any other secretions. It would therefore seem that there should be no basis to permit royal jelly. However, some contemporary authors want to permit it. They argue that in its natural state royal jelly is very bitter, and unfit for human consumption. They argue that any product not fit for human consumption cannot be considered non-kosher.¹¹ This opinion is not widely accepted. In fact, the consensus of all leading national kosher supervisors is that royal jelly is not kosher.¹²

Besides its sweetness, *Chazal* mention other desirable qualities of honey. The *Gemara*¹³ mentions honey as being an item whose medicinal qualities are well known. The *Gemara* specifically



Dovid HaMelech wrote in Tehillim that Torah is “More desirable than gold, even very fine gold; sweeter than honey...”

mentions that honey is beneficial for one's eyesight, which has been documented in modern medical writings as well.¹⁴ *Chazal* also tell us that honey refers to the study of the secrets of *Torah*.¹⁵

Furthermore, *Dovid HaMelech* wrote in *Tehillim*¹⁶ that *Torah* is “More desirable than gold, even very fine gold; sweeter than honey...” Why is *Torah* compared to both precious metals and honey? It has been explained that each has a unique quality. Regarding precious metals, the *passuk* states¹⁷ “One who loves silver, will not be satiated with silver.” A person who is chasing after money will never have enough. However, with honey this is not the case. The *passuk* states¹⁸ “If you find honey, eat only what you need, lest you overfill yourself and regurgitate it.” There is a limit to how much of a sweet item one can ingest. However, the benefit of honey over gold is that one can quickly appreciate the sweetness and pleasant flavor of honey. Monetary items are not sweet, they are simply useful in enabling one to acquire what he needs.

This is the message *Dovid HaMelech*. Both of these positive attributes are present in *Torah*. A person who is studying *Torah* does not need to wait to “taste” the sweetness of *Torah*. From the onset we can “Taste and see how good the (word) of *Hashem* is...”¹⁹ However, we need not worry about overdosing on *Torah*. We cannot “over-sweeten” ourselves by studying a lot of *Torah*. On the contrary, *Torah* is also compared to precious metals from which one can never be satiated!

So this *Rosh Hashanah* as we are enjoying our “*Torah* honey”, let us remember the words of *Shlomo HaMelech*²⁰ “My son, eat honey, for it is good; let its sweet drops be on your palate. Know such is (*Hashem*'s) wisdom for your soul, if you attain it, there is a future; your hope will not be cut off.”

1 See Rema OC 583:1 and Mishneh Brurah ad loc. For a shiur discussing all the customary foods eaten on Rosh Hashanah see <https://youtu.be/A88mEGgt0jw>

2 Bechoros 5b

3 ibid 7b

4 Which is inherently kosher, however depending on which flower the bee collects from, the honey will be branded with a prefix. i.e. Orange Blossom, Clover or Manuka. See <https://organicdailypost.com/different-types-honey/> for a discussion of the possible benefits of the various types of honey.

5 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honey#Formation>

6 The *Darhei Teshuva* (81:93) brings in the name of the *Sefer Beis Hillel*, that for this reason if someone has a custom to refrain from eating animal products (meat and other derivatives) on specific days for Kabbalistic reasons, is still permitted to ingest honey, as we don't view it as an animal byproduct.

7 YD 81:9

8 See *Kaf HaChaim* ibid:72 who brings in the name of the *Pri Chadash* to be strict here, since it is a question of *Torah* law. However, the *Rema* (ad loc.) writes that honey from other insects is not common and we therefore don't have to be concerned.

9 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_jelly#Production

10 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_jelly#Use_by_humans, see also <https://medline-plus.gov/druginfo/natural/853.html>

11 See *Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer* 11:59 in depth and *Shu"t Teshuvos V'hanugos* 4:188. See also *Ohr Yisroel*

15; pages 128-132 for an article by Rabbi Zushe Blech to argue its permissibility as well.

12 OU – See OU document I-45 a written responsum from Rabbi Shechter in which he states the reasons for prohibiting it, and that he gave some to a gentile taster who said that it is fit for human consumption. cRc – <https://askcra.org/item/Food/1075> Star-K – <https://www.star-k.org/articles/kashrus-kurrents/624/do-bee-dont-bee/>

13 See *Berachos* 44b, *Shabbos* 76a, *Yoma* 83b

14 In a recent medical clinical research manuscript, a Lebanese ophthalmologist brings this, as the source for applying diluted honey, as a treatment, into the eyes of patients with ocular edema. See Mansour, A.M., 2002. Epithelial corneal oedema treated with honey, *Clin. Exp. Ophthalmol.*, 30:149-150. However, it seems that the *Gemara* is referring to the ingestion of honey and not applying it topically. See also <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3758027/>

15 See *Chagigah* 14b based on *Mishlei* 25:16

16 19:11

17 *Koheles* 5:9

18 *Mishlei* 25:16

19 *Tehillim* 34:9

20 *Mishlei* 24:13-14

PAS YISROEL LIST

The Shulchan Aruch¹ states that the custom of Jews is to be strict with Pas Yisroel bread products during the Aseres Yemi Teshuva². We therefore provide you with this useful list of Pas Yisroel certified items.



OV

1. **Toby's Challah House** - All items
2. **Elefant Pizza** - All items
3. **Breadsmith** - only those items produced in the store
4. **Kohn's** - Fresh bakery items only
5. During the Aseres Yemi Teshuva select breads at **Schnucks** (Ladue Crossing and Hilltown Village (Chesterfield) select breads and cookies will be marked as Pas Yisroel
6. During the Aseres Yemi Teshuva select honey and almond cakes at **Dierbergs** (Brentwood Pointe, West Oak, Market Place, Four Seasons and Heritage) will be marked as Pas Yisroel. Throughout the year Dierbergs (in above mentioned locations) carry Challah, Miami Onion Rolls and various Oberlander bakery products which are pas yisroel.
7. **Circle Cafe at Crown Center**
Breads: Honey Oat, French Peasant, New York Rye, Pizza crust, Fruit breads and Focaccia. Bagels: plain, sesame and everything. Coffee cakes.

OU

(select list of popular items available locally)

1. **Amnon's Pizza** - All varieties
2. **Bloom's** - All cookies
3. **Damascus** (pita & flatbreads) - Only those items which are marked Pas Yisroel
4. **Dr. Praeger's** - Fishies, Fish Sticks, Fish Cakes, and Pizza Bagels
5. **Gefen** - Crackers, Cookies, Whole

Wheat Breadcrumbs, Matzoh

6. **Haddar** - All products
7. **Jason** - Breadcrumbs (plain, panko, flavored and coating crumbs)
8. **Kedem** - Cookies, Cereal bars, Tea Biscuits and Crackers
9. **Kitov** - All products
10. **Macabee** - Pizza, Pizza Bagel, Breaded Eggplant, Breaded Mushrooms, and Mozzarella Sticks
11. **Manischewitz** - Tam Tams, Italian Coating Crumbs, Cake Mixes, and all Matzoh products
12. **Lily's Bakeshop** - All products
13. **Osem** - All products
14. **Trader Joe's** - Chocolate Babka, Mango Babka, Pumpkin Spice Babka, and Half Moon Cookies

cRc

(select list of popular items available locally)

1. "Enjoy Life" products are not made with the "five grains" therefore they are not considered Pas.
2. All Gluten-Free (*shehakol*) breads and rolls are not considered pas and do not pose any Pas Yisroel issues.
3. **Zelda's** - All products
4. **North Shore Bakery** - All products
5. **Kronos Pita** - All varieties

OK

(select list of popular items available locally)

1. **Aldi - Benton's** Homestyle

(Chocolate Chip Cookies, Oatmeal Raisin Cookies, Peanut Butter Cookies)

2. **Matt's Cookie** - Real Peanut Butter Cookies, Chocolate Chip Cookies, Cranberry Walnut Cookies, Chocolate Chip Pecan Cookies, Peanut Butter Chocolate Chip Cookie, Oatmeal Raisin Cookies, Fig Bars, Strawberry Bars, Whole Wheat Fig Bars
3. **Green's Bakery** - All products
4. **Trader Joe's** - Sprouted 7 Whole Grains Bread, Sprouted Rye Multigrain Bread, Sprouted Whole Grain Pizza Crust
5. **Sabra** - Pretzels that come with the following Hummus: Classic, Roasted Garlic, Roasted Red Pepper, Luscious Lemon.
6. **Konto's** - All pita bread products marked as Pas Yisroel
7. **Wasa** - Crispbread: Fiber Rye, Flaxseed, Light Rye, Sourdough Rye, Whole Grain,

Kof K

(select list of popular items available locally)

1. **Streit's** - All products
2. **Toffuti Cuties** - All varieties
3. **Gabila's Knishes** - All varieties
4. **Oberlander Bakery** - All item

Star-K

(select list of popular items available locally)

1. **Chopsie's** - All products
2. **Benz's** - Kishka

¹ OC 603:1

² For a previous Voice of The Vaad article explaining this custom see <https://goo.gl/beLPW5>

MIKVAH YOMIM TOVIM HOURS:

The Millstone Mikvah will be open with an attendant for the following hours for men to use.



Mens' Mikvah Hours:

Erev Rosh Hashanah, Sunday, 9/9
8am – 5pm sharp

Erev Yom Kippur, Tuesday, 9/18
6:30am – 4pm sharp

Erev Succos, Sunday, 9/23
10:30am – 4:30pm sharp

Hoshana Rabba, Sunday 9/30
10:30am – 4:30pm sharp

Fees:

Adults	\$7.50
Pre-Bar Mitzvah boys	\$5.00
“Klei Kodesh”	\$5.00
Sons of “Klei Kodesh”	FREE

The Mikvah no longer provides free towels

Towel Fee: \$2.50 per towel in addition to the above fee.

Kelim Mikva Hours:

During office hours the Kelim Mikvah is available via entrance through the Vaad office door. At other times the Kelim Mikvah is accessible through a rear door entrance.

The code to enter is **aleph, gimmel, hey**. Please use parking lot in the front of the building. During the winter months (November-March) the Kelim Mikvah may not be accessed after 4 pm and in the summer not after 7 pm.

HALACHA CORNER

Q. I barbequed some meat last evening for dinner. I wrapped up the leftovers and put them in the refrigerator for the next day. The following morning, I had some non-Jewish cleaning help in my home. I briefly stepped out to run some errands without informing the cleaner. I later found the meat in the same place in the refrigerator. Is the meat still allowed to be eaten?

A. The meat is allowed to be consumed. The *Shulchan Aruch* (YD 63:2, 118:10) rules that typically one cannot leave meat without a proper seal in the presence of a gentile. There is a concern that the meat will get

switched with non-kosher meat. However, in a situation where one left it in a specific place, and it was subsequently found in the same place, the meat is permissible even though it was not properly sealed. Also, the fact that you were continuously around, even though you stepped out briefly, gives us more reason to believe that the meat was not switched.



Q. My spouse enjoys preparing various *simanim* to eat on Rosh Hashanah. Many of these foods do not suit my palate. Do I need to eat the foods to get the good omen?

A. You are not required to eat the simanim. The Gemara (Horiyos 12a) records the custom of eating specific foods on Rosh Hashana for a good omen. There are two textual versions noted on how to fulfill this custom. One version reads “One should accustom themselves to eat...” the other reads “One should accustom themselves to see...” The Kaf HaChaim (OC

583:6) explains the dual expressions as different ways to fulfill the custom. The first version directs one to eat each food item and recite the appropriate request. The second version instructs one to simply look at each food item and recite the appropriate request. He concludes by saying that in truth one does not even need to see the food item, as a *tefilla* to *Hashem* for success in the new year is not dependent on any food item. (cf. *Shu”t Teshuvos V’Hanhagos* 2:266)

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בס"ד

August 2018 – Elul

Vaad Hoeir of St. Louis Announces New Kosher Symbol

St. Louis, MO – The Vaad Hoeir of St. Louis is pleased to inform the public of the modification of its Kosher symbol. Over the past number of months, we have spearheaded a campaign to contact companies that have been seen using our  trademarked symbol to connote Vegan status as opposed to Kosher status. Unfortunately, this phenomenon has led to consumer confusion regarding which products are properly kosher supervised.

We hired Husch Blackwell a nationally acclaimed law firm who specialize in trademark law, to guide us on how to best stop this violation of our rights. Although we have met with some measures of success on the legal front, the continuation of this uphill battle is not a viable option. Therefore, the Vaad Hoeir of St. Louis has decided to modify its symbol to ensure that integrity is maintained with our Kosher logo. Concurrently we are updating our website to include a comprehensive listing of consumer kosher certified products, as well as those products which are not under our supervision.

Our new logo will appear as:



We are in the process of notifying our companies of the new logo requirements and expect it to appear on packaging as soon as they are able to process new labels. In the interim, please let us know immediately if you encounter any products with a questionable  symbol. If possible please send an email to ykowalsky@ovkosher.org or a text message to 314-690-1674 with a picture of the item. We will then be able to let you know if the item is indeed under our supervision.