

# Voice OF THE VAAAD

Issue 9 - Elul 5779/Tishrei 5780 - September 2019



**GLUTEN FREE DIET**



**PAS YISROEL LIST**



**BIKUR CHOLIM SOCIETY**



**HALACHA CORNER**



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## THE GLUTEN FREE DIET – A HALACHIC CONUNDRUM

With the rise of gluten-free (GF) products available on the market today, the kosher consumer is faced with a new challenge. What *bracha* does one recite on these items? Are they similar to bread products and therefore require a *mezonos/hamotzi bracha*? Can various mitzvah requirements be satisfied with these “bread-like” items, i.e. *lechem mishneh*, *matzah on leil seder*, or the obligation (for men) to eat in the *Succah* on the first night of *Succos*?!

What is gluten in the first place? Gluten is a family of proteins found mostly in wheat, barley and rye. These proteins are very elastic, which makes them great for making bread and other baked goods. A GF diet is a must for the 2% of the population diagnosed with celiac disease, a disorder in which gluten causes intestinal inflammation. Wheat allergy occurs in some children, can cause a serious allergic reaction, and is usually outgrown by age 12. Some people have non-celiac gluten sensitivity and just feel better on a GF diet. Still others experiment with the GF diet for possible health benefits.

The halachic considerations regarding the GF diet depend upon why an individual is avoiding gluten.

Celiac disease causes inflammation of the intestine, which can result in failure to absorb adequate calcium, iron and several other vitamins. While the severity is variable, this has the potential to be both painful and medically dangerous. A wheat allergy can also be medically dangerous, causing severe reaction, with swelling of the mouth and throat, hives, difficulty breathing, or even a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction. Those who have chosen a GF diet for lifestyle reasons typically have no negative reactions when they

ingest gluten products.

A general question needs to be addressed; Must a person perform a mitzvah if doing so will cause them to become sick? In this context, there are three levels of sickness: *safek sakanah* (slight chance of mortal danger); *choleh sheain bo sakanah* (illness that temporarily incapacitates); and *michush bealmah* (minor discomfort). It goes without saying that if there is any chance that performing a mitzvah will lead to *safek sakanah* the person should definitely not perform the mitzvah. However, a celiac patient who breaks his diet one time to perform a mitzvah will typically fall into the category of a *choleh sheain*



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*bo sakanah*. We will therefore limit our discussion to the *halachos* of those cases.

As a general rule, a person is not required to spend more than a 1/5 of his money to fulfill a positive mitzvah *min ha'torah* such as *lulav* or *matzah*.<sup>2</sup> What if eating wheat *matzah* will make the celiac sick to the point that he or she will become a *choleh sheain bo sakanah*? Is this also valid justification for that person not to perform the mitzvah?<sup>3</sup>

The *Binyan Shlomo* (OC 47) suggests that hurting one's body is to be considered more serious than spending one's money. Inasmuch as one is not required to spend more than 1/5 of his money for a positive mitzvah, he is also not required to make himself sick as a *choleh sheain bo sakanah*.<sup>4</sup> The *Tzitz Eliezer*<sup>5</sup> accepts this as the normative *halachic* practice.

Although this would now lead us to the conclusion that a celiac patient is absolved from fulfilling many *mitzvos* associated with bread/*matzah* consumption, all help is not lost. Of the five species of grains, oats are known to be safe for most of those suffering from celiac disease.<sup>6</sup> It would therefore follow that one who cannot consume wheat may be able to fulfill his or her *mitzvah* obligations safely with *challah/matzah* produced from oats.

There is a caveat to the *mitzvah* of *matzah*. The *Rema*<sup>7</sup> writes that the custom is to produce *matzah* only from wheat flour. Commentators advance different opinions for this custom. The *Maharsham*<sup>8</sup> suggests that we see from the *Gemara* that the *chimitz* process is different for each one of the grains. We have the most experience with wheat and are knowledgeable in its *chimitz* process. With other grains i.e. oats we don't have enough experience to be confident that the dough did not become *chametz*. In this opinion, our only option is to produce *matzah* from wheat.

The *Mishneh Brurah*<sup>9</sup> however explains the custom of the

*Rema* differently. He writes that the reason why we favor using wheat flour over other grain flours, is because people find it more enjoyable. Meaning that there is not necessarily a *halachic* preference of wheat over other grains, only that we should enjoy the *mitzvah* with the tastiest grain. The *Mishneh Brurah* concludes that if wheat is not available one should choose from whichever of the other four grains is choicest to him, in order that he eats the *matzah* with zest. According to this approach in understanding the *Rema*, there would be no hesitation with

using oat *matzos* for a celiac or anyone else who appreciates their taste. The *Nishmas Avraham*<sup>10</sup> concludes that one can fulfill their obligation on *Pesach* with oat *matzos*.<sup>11</sup>

Let us now discuss the proper *bracha* for GF breads. Bread and cakes (unlike oat *matzah*) made from gluten-free oats are not typically made from 100% oat flour, but rather a mixture of several "flours" (e.g. rice, potato starch, bean) and other ingredients. Accordingly, the *bracha rishona* and the *bracha achronah* depend on several factors. The *Shulchan Aruch*<sup>12</sup> writes that, on bread made from beans, corn, and/or millet flour, one recites *Shehakol* before eating and *Borei Nefashos* after. However, if one bakes bread using rice flour, one would recite *Mezonos* before eating and *Borei Nefashos* after. If bread is made from a mixture of rice and corn flour, then one follows the majority:

If there is more rice flour, the *bracha* would be *mezonos*. If there is more corn flour, the *bracha* would be *shehakol*. If one adds gluten-free oat flour for taste, (and not just for consistency), then the *bracha* becomes *Hamotzi*, since oats are one of the five special grains that require *Hamotzi*. However, in order to be able to recite the full *Bentching* afterwards, one must eat a *kezayis* of oats. For example, if the bread is made with two cups of corn flour and one cup of oat flour, it would not be enough to eat one *kezayis* of bread in order to *Bentch*. Instead, one would need to eat three *kezaysim* (the volume of one and a half eggs) of bread, *lichatchila* in under 3 minutes.<sup>13</sup>



### Can various mitzvah requirements be satisfied with these "bread-like" items?

1 Much of the source material for this article was culled from a masterful essay published in The Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society – Issue #59 (2010) 5-50 by Rabbi Dovid Cohen of the c.Rc.

2 See Kesubos 50a, Rema OC 656:1

3 We seemingly have a precedent in *halacha* that a person may make themselves ill to perform a mitzvah, see *Shulchan Aruch* (OC 472:10). However, the *Mishneh Brurah* (ibid:35) writes that if performing the mitzvah will cause one to be bedridden, he should not perform the mitzvah.

4 Similarly, *Birkei Yosef* (OC 640:5) explains that a *choleh sheain bo sakanah* is exempt from a positive mitzvah, where performing the mitzvah exacerbates the causes of his sickness.

5 14:27 & 19:22 – see there where he quotes others who hold this opinion as well.

6 Although this is a discussion in Rabbinic literature if oats are the grain referred to by Chazal as *shiboles shual*, the overwhelming majority of *halachic* deciders say that it is, see

*Nishmas Avraham* (OC 461:1:3)

7 OC 453:1

8 Daas Torah OC 453:2. See Shu"t Minchas Yitzchak 9:49.

9 453:1:2

10 Ibid in the name of Rav Ovadia Yosef zt"l.

11 There is another discussion which addresses an issue that might exist with oat matzos, involving the processing of the raw oats, see article of Rabbi David Cohen (ibid – pg. 20-24).

12 OC 208:7-9

13 Adapted from the OU Kosher - Halacha Yomis – May 19,2016. See article by Rabbi Dovid Heber at: <https://www.star-k.org/articles/articles/seasonal/425/the-guide-to-halachic-food-measurements/> - where he discusses the contemporary size of a *kezayis*. According to Rabbi Moshe Heineman it would be equivalent to 1.27 fl oz. See <https://oukosher.org/blog/kosher-professionals/pesach-shiurim/> - for other opinions.

# PAS YISROEL LIST 5780/2019

The *Shulchan Aruch*<sup>1</sup> states that the custom of Jews is to be strict with Pas Yisroel bread products during the *Aseres Yemi Teshuva*<sup>2</sup>. We therefore provide you with this useful list of Pas Yisroel certified items. Please note, all Gluten-Free (*shehakol*) breads and rolls are not considered pas and do not pose any Pas Yisroel issues.



## OVK

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. **Cafe Couer** - All items
6. **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.
7. During the *Aseres Yemi Teshuva* select bagels, breads and cookies at **Schnucks** (Ladue Crossing and Hilltown Village (Chesterfield)) will be marked as *Pas Yisroel*
8. 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 the above-mentioned locations) carry Challah, Miami Onion Rolls and various Oberlander bakery products which are *pas yisroel*.

## OU

(select list of popular items available locally)

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

7. **Haddar** - All products
8. **Jason** - Breadcrumbs (plain, panko, flavored and coating crumbs)
9. **Kedem** - Cookies, Cereal bars, Tea Biscuits and Crackers
10. **Kemach** - Cookies and Crackers (when marked as Pas Yisroel)
11. **Kitov** - All products
12. **Macabee** - Pizza, Pizza Bagel, Breaded Eggplant, Breaded Mushrooms, and Mozzarella Sticks
13. **Manischewitz** - Tam Tams, Italian Coating Crumbs, Cake Mixes, and all Matzah products
14. **Miami Onion Rolls** - All products
15. **Natural Ovens** - Whole Grain-Right Wheat Bread, Whole Grain-Multi-Grain Bread, 100% Whole Grain Bread, Better White Bread, Oatmeal Bread. The Wheat Buns is pas yisroel according to cRc guidelines.
16. **Lily's Bakeshop** - All products
17. **Osem** - All products
18. **S. Rosen's - Mary Ann** - Breads, Buns & Rolls - according to the cRc guidelines.
19. **Trader Joe's** - Chocolate Babka, Mango Babka, Pumpkin Spice Babka, and Half Moon Cookies

## cRc

(select list of popular items available locally)

1. **Eli's Cheesecake**
2. "**Enjoy Life**" products are not made with the "five grains" therefore they are not considered *Pas*.
3. **Kronos Pita** - All varieties
4. **North Shore Bakery** - All products

5. **Pretzilla** - All varieties of pretzel buns
6. **Zelda's** - All products

## OK

(select list of popular items available locally)

1. **Aldi - Simply Nature** - Knock Your Sprouts Off - Sprouted 7-Grain Wraps
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 and the Avocado Toast.
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 items

## Star-K

(select list of popular items available locally)

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

<sup>1</sup> OC 603:1

<sup>2</sup> For a previous Voice of The Vaad article explaining this custom see <https://ovkosher.org/voice-of-the-vaad-1/>

# HALACHA CORNER

**Q.** I recently inherited from my parent's estate a set of mother-of-pearl handled steak knives (stainless steel blade). My parents did not keep a strictly kosher home and I cannot guarantee that these knives were only used with kosher products. Is it possible to kasher them?

**A.** In order to kasher any vessel it first needs to be determined if the material it is made from is kasherable. As we have previously discussed<sup>1</sup> metals are a kasherable material. However, the whole vessel needs to be kasherred in order to bring it into kosher use. Mother-of-pearl is



similar to vessels made from bone/horn material. The *Shulchan Aruch*<sup>2</sup> states that we do not kasher these materials because they are prone to get ruined in boiling hot water, and we are concerned that one will not adequately kasher them. However, the *Mishna Brurah*<sup>3</sup> rules that we are allowed to do regular *hagalah* on "perl-mutter" (Yiddish for mother-of-pearl), since due to its dense nature we are not afraid a person will not kasher it sufficiently. Of course, the knives would have to be cleaned properly as well prior to kashering, especially in the areas where food is likely to get trapped.

<sup>1</sup> See Voice of The Vaad – Issue #8, available at: <https://ovkosher.org/voice-of-the-vaad-8/>  
<sup>2</sup> OC 451:7

<sup>3</sup> Ibid:55

## BIKUR CHOLIM SOCIETY

The Bikur Cholim Society has been providing for local and visiting families non-stop throughout the past year.

We would like to thank all those who have volunteered their time, professional services and to ensure meals were made and delivered.

The maintaining of the Ohel Michoel & Rina house and additional apartments in the community for our brethren in need, has ongoing costs. Please consider making a donation to ensure we

can continue to help all those who depend on us. This past year we were able to assist over 50 families who have turned to us for help.



Tax deductible donations can be made on the web at: [www.bcstlweb.com](http://www.bcstlweb.com). Or checks can be made out to "Vaad Hoer" memo – Bikur

Cholim and mailed to 4 Millstone Campus Drive St. Louis, MO 63146.

For more information please contact Rabbi Kowalsky at 314-690-1674

## MEN'S MIKVAH HOURS



### EREV ROSH HASHANA

Sunday, 9/29

7 AM – 4:30 PM sharp

### EREV YOM KIPPUR

Tuesday, 10/8

6:30 AM – 4 PM sharp

### EREV SUCCOS

Sunday, 10/13

10:30 AM – 4:30 PM sharp

### HOSHANA RABBA

Sunday 10/20

9:30 AM – 4:30 PM sharp

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