

# ליקוטי ופסקי הלכות "חוקי חיים"

ותלמוד  
"תקופת התנאים"  
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שע"י "חדר הוראה" שבונת מנחת יצחק פעיה"ק ירושלם תובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

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Hafshas Challah [3] – Sourdough

Parshas Korach 5784

334

## Hafshas Challah – General

### Before or After Dough Rises?

1. The chiyuv to separate challah takes effect immediately after the dough is formed, if there is enough flour to require hafshas of course (the shiur is detailed in the previous issue, 333). Thus, one may do hafshas either before the dough rises or after it rises, as the chiyuv of hafshas depends on the amount of flour in the dough, not the size of the dough (כמבואר בשו"ע י"ד סי' שכ"ד ס"ד). However, if there is a chance one will need to add flour to the dough before arranging it, it is better to do hafshas after adding the flour unless one has in mind at the time of hafshas that it should also cover the flour that will be added.

### Oatmeal Cookies

2. The chiyuv hafshas challah only applies to dough; a dough is something made from flour, water, and the like. However, a mixture of grain kernels clumped together with sticky ingredients is not considered a dough for the purposes of hafshas challah.
3. **Oat flour with wheat flour.** When making cookies from 'oat flour' mixed with wheat flour, the flours combine for the minimum shiur to require hafshas, as the dough is made from both types of flours – oat and wheat – and it is defined as a dough. When the combined amount is enough to require hafshas, hafshas must be done (שו"ע סי' שכ"ד ס"ב).
4. **Wheat flour with whole oats.** If whole oats are added to wheat flour, the oats do not combine for the minimum shiur of flour, as kernels do not make dough (ע"פ גמי מנחת דף ע' ע"א, חלה פ"א ה"א, א"ר). (ה"ל חלה סי' ר"י). Thus, if there is a minimum shiur of just wheat flour, hafshas challah is required; if there is not the minimum shiur from wheat alone, the dough is potur from challah. However, if the kernels were soaked in water, crushed, and mixed with wheat flour such that it more resembles a dough, hafshas challah is done without a bracha (ע"י משי"כ מו"ר הגרי"י בלויא בלקט העומר פ"ה הע"ט).
5. **Wheat flour with instant oats.** Oat flakes, e.g., Quaker brand oats [from where the Hebrew generic term קווקר comes] meant for quick preparation which more resemble flour, are the most commonly used oats for oatmeal cookies. A combination of these instant oats with wheat flour can create a mixture just like dough. Thus, the oats are also counted toward the shiur; if, between the instant oats and the wheat flour together, there is a minimum shiur for hafshas, the dough requires hafshas challah.
6. It should be noted that the quantity of instant oats required for hafshas is different than the quantity of oat flour (given in the previous issue, 333). The shiur for instant oats is smaller, as they have a greater volume per unit of weight, and the chiyuv of hafshas is based on volume (Issue 333, par. 16). Thus, 800 grams or more of instant oats requires hafshas without a bracha. If it is mixed with wheat flour, one must calculate the shiur accordingly.

### A Freezer for "Combining in a Basket" [צירוף סל]

7. **Combining in dishes.** If two of the same type of dough are in the same dish and neither one has the minimum shiur for hafshas, the dish combines them; they are viewed as one and the chiyuv hafshas applies. Similarly, if the two doughs were baked when they did not have the minimum shiur but were placed in the same dish after the baking, the dish combines them, and the chiyuv hafshas takes effect even after they are baked (שו"ע סי' שכ"ה ס"א).

8. **Combining in a freezer.** Accordingly, many poskim discuss the halacha when one bakes multiple items, each without the minimum shiur for hafshas, and then stores them in the freezer. Being that the freezer has the status of a כלי if it has a capacity of less than forty sa'ah [about 330 liters], do we view the freezer as a container that combines the baked items? If we do, one would need to do hafshas challah on items made from the same type of dough which, all together, have enough flour to require hafshas.
9. For example, if one baked challoos for Shabbos using 1 kg of flour [less than the shiur] and placed them in the freezer, and then made the same quantity of challoos and placed them in the freezer together with the first batch, does the chiyuv hafshas take effect? The same shaila applies when one bakes many of the same type of cakes or cookies for a simcha or the like.
10. **Strictly speaking.** Strictly speaking, many poskim agree that the freezer does not combine items, for multiple reasons. Items are placed into the freezer for frozen storage, not with the intention to combine them (ש"ת שבט הלוי ח"י סי' קצ"ב, הגרש"א בשש"כ ח"ב פמ"ב הע' ). Also, usually each item in a freezer is enclosed in its own bag, which creates a separation between them that does not allow them to combine in a dish (ש"ת מנחת ח"ה סי' קט). (ע"י ש"ת מנחת חן י"ד סי' ס"א). There are also other reasons to be meikel. Hence, the general public has a reliable basis to be meikel.
11. **Machmirim.** Nevertheless, some are machmir out of concern that a freezer does work to combine the baked items, especially if they are not in plastic (קובץ מבית לוי) or if it is a basic plastic covering not there for the purpose of creating a separation, but just to prevent the items from getting the "freezer taste," which is viewed like a part of the baked item (הגר"ן קרליץ, מנחת שי' סי' ט"ז).
12. To avoid any possible safeik, it is worthwhile to remove all the baked goods of the same type and combine them in a dish or bag to create a definite chiyuv with a quantity one can make a bracha on. Then, hafshas challah should be done so that it definitively covers everything. This is because if the combined quantity would not require a bracha according to all poskim, the items are still subject to safeik, so when they are returned to the freezer, there is a possibility that they will again combine with other items of the same type which did not have a valid hafshas, and the cumulative quantity will have the minimum shiur to require hafshas according to all poskim.

### Sourdough Bread

13. There has been a trend in the world as of late to eat healthier foods. People are increasingly using flours made from various grains; in particular, there is renewed consumption of natural sourdough. People bake breads without any ingredients other than water, flour, and salt, with the sourdough taking the place of artificial yeast. Many bakeries sell sourdough bread with excellent hechsheirim to satisfy demand from consumers for healthier foods. Similarly, many women bake sourdough bread themselves in their own homes, as it is more natural, and it is a new craze. New shailos arise accordingly.

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14. **Hashem's wonders.** This is also an opportunity to be amazed by Hashem's wonders. Flour looks like simple, white dust. Yet, adding a little water activates its inner power to produce bacteria which can then ferment other flour to produce dough, and eventually bread. Since it is a process that requires feeding the sourdough at regular intervals and putting it to sleep and waking it up over a period of time, it presents an opportunity to experience nature and recognize Hashem's greatness through His creations. This is something we lack today, as we do not work fields and grow produce as people once did. Then, the mitzva of hafrashas challah comes – we dedicate the beginning of our handiwork and the first of our kneading to Hashem. Also, after this process we have more kavana when we make the bracha לחם מן הארץ להפריש חלה.

### Hafrashas Challah with Sourdough

#### **Starter**

15. To make sourdough bread, a sourdough "starter" is used. This is made from a mixture of just flour and water that undergoes a fermentation process for about two weeks. Throughout this time, more flour and water are added at regular intervals to feed the starter. After the starter is ready, whenever one uses it, he adds new flour and water to the starter, then takes some of it to cause fermentation. This portion is used to prepare dough by adding more flour and water to it.

16. **Starter is potur from hafrasha.** The starter itself is not fit for consumption, so it itself is potur from hafrashas challah (עי דרך (אמונה בה"ל פ"ו ה"ט). Thus, even if one makes a large starter with enough flour to require hafrashas challah, he does not do hafrasha, as it is potur.

17. **Flour in the starter counts toward the shiur.** However, when sourdough starter is used to ferment other flour, the quantity of flour in the starter counts toward the shiur of flour in the dough for the chiyuv hafrashas challah (שו"ע סי' שכ"ד ס"ג). E.g., if a starter has equal parts flour and water, as is common in starter recipes, and 100 grams of starter is added to 1600 grams of flour, 50 grams of the starter is flour and combines with the 1600 grams of flour to require hafrashas challah.

### Hafrashas Challah with Regular Dough

18. With regular dough, it is common to make a large batch of dough and then portion it out into pieces, each of which is used to form a loaf of bread or challah and then baked. The chiyuv hafrasha takes effect on the dough while it is whole [if it has the minimum shiur]. Thus, hafrasha is done while it is a whole batch of dough.

### Combining Amounts for Hafrasha with Sourdough Bread

19. When making sourdough bread, it is common to prepare a separate dough for each loaf or two in a separate dish. E.g., 1000 grams of flour are placed in each dish together with the starter, and then two loaves are formed. The same is done in a second dish. In other words, in the dough stage, no one dish contained enough flour to require hafrashas challah. However, when they are all subsequently baked simultaneously in one oven, the bread might combine for a chiyuv hafrasha inside the oven, which is a container that can combine them. Similarly, perhaps they all combine for the shiur after baking if they are all placed into one bag or box, or into the freezer, which is a כלי if it does not have a capacity of forty sa'ah (above, 8). Then, all the loaves combine to require hafrasha.

20. **Combine them.** Due to these concerns, it is advisable to combine the loaves at some stage so that they all require hafrashas challah and will not get into shailos about combining.

21. **Dough stage.** One way to combine them for hafrashas challah is via נשיכה, i.e., stretching some dough from one dish and attaching it to the dough in another dish so that the two are connected. If there are three or four separate dishes, all the doughs are connected through a piece of dough between them. Then, challah is separated from one loaf to make all the loaves potur.

22. **After baking.** Another way to combine the loaves can be done after baking. I.e., the loaves are placed together in one box or bag such that they are all completely contained within the box's interior, and then challah is separated from one of them. When one intends to do this from the outset, he can set aside a small piece of dough before the baking to be the hafrashas challah after the loaves are baked. This way, instead of cutting into any of the challos, one can use the small piece he set aside ahead of time for the hafrasha.

23. **Bracha on hafrasha after baking.** When doing hafrasha after the loaves are baked, the regular wording, "להפריש חלה מן", is not said, as the loaves are no longer dough [העיסה]. Instead, the bracha is "להפריש חלה."

## Sourdough Bread – General

### Various Utensils Used

24. **Scoring knife.** It is common to use a special scoring knife for the sourdough to give it an impressive design or shape or to prevent uncontrolled cracking during the baking process. The knife consists of a handle with a special sharp blade that is attached to the end. The shaila is whether the blade requires tevila.



25. Since the blade comes in contact with the dough, it requires tevila. Although the blade is disposed of after some time and replaced with a new one, since it is used several times, it is not considered disposable. It is considered a utensil and requires tevila. However, as with a shechita knife, no bracha is made since it only comes in contact with food during preparation, not during a meal (see Issue 93, par. 24).

### Pre-Seasoned Dutch Oven

26. Many people use a special cast-iron pot, called a Dutch oven, to make sourdough bread. The advantage is that it spreads heat evenly, causing the sourdough to be well-baked. There are several types, including what is called pre-seasoned, i.e., the pot undergoes a process during its manufacture in which it is treated and coated with oil without a hechsher, then heated at a high temperature to create a protective layer that prevents the pot from rusting in the absence of oil. The shaila is whether the pot must be kashered before use besides for its chiyuv tevila.



27. **Type of oil.** It is impossible for the most part to determine exactly what the oil coating is made from. Thus, it is at least a safeik whether it is vegetable oil, which is not assur, or animal oil, which creates shailos of forbidden food and how to kasher it, as will be explained.

28. **Assur liquid.** The poskim argue whether a liquid of issur cooked in a pot is viewed as absorbed into the pot through the fire's heat, in which case it is kashered through libun chomur, or whether it is viewed as absorbed via a liquid, in which case hagala or libun kal suffices (see Issue 84). Some say the dish requires libun chomur, as it is considered to have absorbed the issur through the fire's heat (רמ"ע מפאנו סי' צ"ו הובא (בש"ך י"ד סי' קכ"א סק"ה). Others say hagala or libun kal is enough, as per the halacha of something absorbed via liquid (פמ"ג א"ח סי' תנ"א משב"ז (סקט"ז, הובא בגל רנ"א שו"ע י"ד על דברי הש"ך שם חז"יא). Some say the dish requires libun chomur, as that is the opinion of most Rishonim (א"ח סי' קכ"ט סק"ט, י"ד סי' מ"ד סק"ד, שו"ת הר צבי ח"ג י"ד סי' ק"י).

29. **Requires kashering.** Thus, if one buys a pre-seasoned Dutch oven, he should l'chatchila kasher it through hagala in boiling water. He can also put it in an oven set to the highest heat setting and kasher it through libun kal. Most poskim hold this suffices, and also, it is a safeik in the first place whether the oil used for the seasoning is from something assur. One who wants to be machmir can put the pot into a self-cleaning oven, which effects libun chomur, thereby satisfying all opinions.

30. **Dutch oven which doesn't require kashering.** Some Dutch ovens are not pre-seasoned and do not require kashering before use, e.g., Dutch ovens coated with enamel, which are usually identifiable by their glossy finish, or Dutch ovens pre-seasoned with vegetable oil, which is kosher. [Lodge brand Dutch ovens are pre-seasoned with soy oil and are kosher (as attested to by the CRC kashrus organization).]

### Mechiras Chometz

31. Sourdough starter takes time to prepare, as described (15). Also, it improves with time and age. Thus, people regularly want to know the best way to have starter ready right after Pesach without concern for chometz she'avar alav haPesach, as it will take time to prepare a starter from scratch with flour ground after Pesach.

32. The best option is to wrap the starter in a marked bag and sell it with a kinyan of money to a non-Jew, who will take it to his house and keep it in his fridge throughout Pesach with the complete understanding that it belongs to him. After Pesach, one can buy the starter back for more money than the non-Jew paid, so that the non-Jew is in full agreement that it is a full-fledged transaction. Although some do not usually want to rely on selling chometz (see Issue 88), that is only when the chometz remains in the Jew's house and the non-Jew only takes a pile of documents or keys to his house, making it look like a joke. However, when the non-Jew takes the chometz to his house and makes a true kinyan, one can fully rely on it without any concerns.

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