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BEE OR NOT BEE? THAT IS THE QUESTION.

Which honey does the Torah mean?

Adapted from the writings of Dayan Yitzhak Grossman

The JTA reports:

Ben & Jerry's Israel operation has come up with a flavor that does not leave much to interpretation. Called "Milk and Honey," a nod to the Biblical description of the Land of Israel, its namesake ingredients are supplied by Israeli cows and bees and its chocolate fudge pieces come shaped like Stars of David. The company, which split from its American counterpart after a contentious 2021 boycott fight, is billing the new pint as its "most Israeli flavor ever" and, on its website, as a "symbol of hope, rehabilitation, and positive action" after the Hamas-led Oct. 7 attack.

Its ingredients and production come from southern Israeli communities most affected by the massacre and the war that followed. The company, based in the southern city of Kiryat Malachi, said it "felt a responsibility to take an active part in the region's recovery process."¹

The word "dvash (honey)" appears numerous times in Tanach, and while some instances clearly

refer to bee honey,² others are ambiguous. With respect to the description of Eretz Yisrael as "eret zavav chalav udvash,"³ Tana'im disagree about the meaning of both *dvash* and *chalav*:

R' Eliezer says: "*Chalav*" is the fat of the fruits; "*dvash*" is date honey.

R' Akiva says: "*Chalav*" is real *chalav* (i.e., milk); "*dvash*" is the honey of forests, and so it says (in Sefer Shmuel): "The people came to the forest and behold! There was an oozing of *dvash*."^{4,5}

R' Akiva's understanding of *dvash* is, in turn, not entirely clear; the *pasuk* he cites in Shmuel is explained by Rashi⁶ (followed by the Metzudos⁷) as referring to sugarcane, but R' Dovid Zvi Hoffmann seems to understand R' Akiva as interpreting *dvash* to mean bee honey.⁸

The Gemara does not seem to follow either R' Eliezer or R' Akiva. It asks: "From where do we derive that the milk of a kosher animal

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² See, e.g., Shoftim 14:8, and cf. Shu"t HaRadvaz cheilek 3 toward the end of siman 962 (527) at the beginning of p. 38a.

³ Shmos 13:5 (and earlier in 3:17).

⁴ Shmuel I 14:26.

⁵ Mechilta DeR' Shimon bar Yochai (Frankfurt 5665) ibid. (p. 32).

⁶ Rashi ibid. v. 25-27.

⁷ Metzudos Dovid ibid.

⁸ See his note to the Mechilta ibid. os 20. See also R' Yaakov Zisberg, *Eretz Zavav Chalav Udavash*, Hamaayan, Gilyon 246 Tamuz 5783 [63,4] pp. 25-27.

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PARSHAS PINCHAS

A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Excerpted and adapted from a *shiur* by Rav Moshe Yitzchok Weg

In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, there shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall do no work of labor, it shall be a day of shofar sounding for you.

Bemidbar 29:1

The mitzvah *deOreisa* of *tekias shofar* requires three series of *tekiah-truah-tekiah* (Rosh Hashanah 33b). But the Gemara says we don't know whether *truah* is medium-length sounds (*shvarim*), very short sounds (what we know as *truah*), or a combination of the two (*shvarim-truah*). Therefore, R' Avahu instituted that we blow a minimum of thirty blasts on Rosh Hashanah: three sets with *shvarim-truah*, three with *shvarim*, and three with *truah*.

The simple meaning of the Gemara, which appears to be adopted by the Rambam and Shulchan Aruch, is that we are uncertain about how to blow the *truah*, and thirty blasts are necessary to ensure we fulfill the mitzvah. Three sets with *shvarim-truah* would not suffice, because if either *shvarim* or *truah* is the true sound, the other sound would be a *hefsek*. But Rav Hai Gaon maintains that there is no uncertainty. Rather, each of the three versions of *truah* is valid, and different communities used different versions. R' Avahu's *takanah* unified the practice of Klal Yisrael.

According to the Rambam and Shulchan Aruch, it is difficult to understand why the halacha is that a *shvarim* blown within the set of *tara"t* (*tekiah-truah-tekiah*) constitutes a *hefsek*. Within this set, we should view the *shvarim* as not even being a *kol* shofar, and non-shofar sounds don't constitute

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Q&A from the
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Door Post-It

Q May I transfer a mezuzah from my house to my office?

A The Gemara (Bava Metzia 102a) cautions against removing mezuzos when vacating a home. Tosfos explains that a house left without mezuzos is vulnerable to *mazikin*, and removing them exposes the incoming residents to that danger.

The She'iltos DeRav Achai Gaon (Bemidbar 126) offers a different reason: Putting a mezuzah out of service denigrates the mitzvah. This is similar to the *din* that tzitzis strings may not be removed from a garment unless they will be installed on another one (O.C. 15:1).

According to the She'iltos, one who vacates a home may transfer the mezuzos to his new home. But the halacha follows
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is permitted?" It offers a number of possible sources, including

Or, if you wish, from here: "a land flowing with milk and honey." If milk is not permitted, would the *pasuk* praise Eretz Yisrael for something that is not fit for consumption?⁹

This is the view of R' Akiva, that *eretz zavas chalav* refers to milk. But one *daf* later, with respect to the permissibility of bee honey, the Gemara does not cite the description of Eretz Yisrael as an *eretz zavas...udvash*, but offers two other justifications instead:

For what reason did they say that bees' honey is permitted? Because they ingest [the nectar of flowers] into their bodies and do not excrete [honey] from their bodies (rather, their bodies transform the nectar into honey—Rashi)...

For it was taught in a *breisa*: R' Yaakov says: "But this you may eat from all creeping creatures that fly" (Vayikra 11:21). This teaches: *This* you may eat, but you may not eat a nonkosher creeping creature that flies.

Regarding a nonkosher creeping creature that flies, it is written explicitly in the Torah that it is prohibited, so why is that inference necessary?

Rather, the *breisa* means to teach that you may not eat a nonkosher creeping creature that flies, but you *may* eat what a nonkosher flying creature produces. And what is that? It is bees' honey. (This is based on *sheretz* having dual meanings—Rashi in his first explanation.)¹⁰

The conspicuous omission of *eretz zavas chalav udvash* as a source for the permissibility of bee honey seems to indicate that the Gemara understands *dvash* like R' Eliezer, as fruit honey rather than bee honey.

In at least one appearance of *dvash* in the Torah, there are halachic ramifications to its meaning. The Torah commands, "for you shall not cause to go up in smoke from any *se'or* (leavening) or *dvash* as a fire-offering to Hashem."¹¹ Rashi comments that all fruit sweetness is called *dvash*,¹² which might imply that bee honey is not included in the prohibition.¹³ But the Rambam's codification of the *issur* mentions *dvash* without further elaboration,¹⁴ and the Mishneh Lamelech is unsure whether he means to include bee honey.¹⁵ The Chinuch explicitly states that *dvash* in this context includes "the known honey (i.e., bee honey), as well as date honey—which is

the standard *dvash* of the Torah—as well as the liquid that emerges from sweet fruits."¹⁶ The Radvaz, too, records that although he had initially maintained that the prohibition is limited to the *shivas haminim* (the seven species for which Eretz Yisrael is praised), he ultimately concluded, based on numerous lines of reasoning, that

Dvash that is mentioned in the Torah includes all types of *dvash*: that which emerges from fruit—whatever fruit it may be—as well as bee honey. And if one offers in smoke any amount of it, or from a mixture containing it, he is flogged.¹⁷

This is apparently the position of the Netziv in Ha'ameik Davar as well. He writes, in the context of the *issur* to offer *dvash*, that the Torah uses the term for anything that sweetens and flavors food.¹⁸

From *Pitum Haketoress* in the liturgy:

Bar Kapara taught further: Had one put a *kortov*¹⁹ of *dvash* into [the incense], no person could have resisted its scent. Why did they not mix *dvash* into it? Because the Torah says, "for you shall not cause to go up in smoke from any *se'or* or *dvash* as a fire-offering to Hashem."

Acharonim wonder about the point of this *breisa*: Why is it important to know that mixing *dvash* into the incense would have made its scent irresistible if doing so is *asur*, and why ask why it wasn't done given the obviousness of the answer?²⁰ They offer various explanations. But in light of the above, we can suggest that Bar Kapara was referring to bee honey (which is generally the meaning of *dvash* in Chazal's parlance²¹), and although, as we have seen, many authorities do understand the prohibition to encompass bee honey, this is by no means obvious. Indeed, this *breisa* is actually one of the Radvaz's proofs that the prohibition includes bee honey:

Bar Kapara taught...And if it is so (that the prohibition is limited to *dvash* of the *shivas haminim*), let them bring bee *dvash* or that of other fruits like berries or carobs...and mix it into the *ketoress* to intensify its scent. It is thus certainly implicit that all types of *dvash* are prohibited to offer up in smoke.²²

⁹Sefer Hachinuch (Frankfurt) mitzvah 117, and cf. Minchas Chinuch ibid.

¹⁰Radvaz ibid.

¹¹Ha'ameik Davar ibid. Cf. the beginning of this article: Toras Hakorbanos, Issur Chazmetz (Udvash).

¹²ArtScroll Siddur: "A kortov equals 1/256 of a kav, or approximately 1/20 of a fluid ounce. Here it is used to mean a minimal amount, a touch."

¹³See the end of Shu"t HaRadvaz cheilek 4 siman 1100 (36); Birlei Yosef O.C. siman 132 as 10; Pnei Moshe (R' Moshe Cohen: 5747) siman 132 p. 35; Shu"t Yabia Omer cheilek 9 O.C. siman 85 as 6.

¹⁴See Shu"t HaRadvaz cheilek 3 ibid. toward the end of p. 37b.

¹⁵See Shu"t HaRadvaz cheilek 3 ibid. toward the end of p. 37b. ²²Ibid. p. 38a. Despite the Radvaz's earlier assertion that *dvash* as used by Chazal generally refers to bee honey, he is apparently not assuming that Bar Kapara's references to *dvash* here actually refer to bee honey; he is just asking why bee honey was not indeed added. Perhaps he means to argue that even if one were to deny that Bar Kapara was referring to bee honey, he would still have to address the question of why bee honey was not indeed added. Cf. here.

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Tosfos that generally, the mezuzos are to be left for the new residents. In your case, there are no new residents, so Tosfos's reason is inapplicable. But the She'iltos's reason is also cited by the *poskim* (Bach O.C. 21), so the *chumros* of both reasons are followed. But does the She'iltos's reason apply in your case?



RAV ARYEH
FINKEL

Recent *poskim* say that even transferring a mezuzah from a doorway that requires it *mid'Oreisa* to one that needs it only *mid'Rabanan* is a denigration (Teshuvos Vehanhagos 1:649). But this is not clear-cut, as there is a similar *machlokes* whether tzitzis strings may be transferred from a garment obligated *mid'Oreisa* to one obligated *mid'Rabanan* (see Mishnah Brurah 15:1), which should apply to mezuzah as well.

Does an office even require a mezuzah? The Torah uses the word "*baisecha* (your house)," which implies a dwelling. The Mechaber (Y.D. 286:11) says a store is exempt, and the Taz (ibid. 10) adds that even if the owner sits in it all day, it is not a *bais dirah*, because he goes home at night.

But some *Acharonim* disagree: The Aruch Hashulchan (286:26) argues that a store requires a mezuzah, because merchandise is kept there around the clock and a *bais ha'otzar* (warehouse) requires a mezuzah. Others (Yad Ketanah, cited in Pis'chei Teshuvah ibid. 10) hold that even without storage, a permanent and enclosed commercial space needs a mezuzah, and the Mechaber's exemption applies only to makeshift market booths.

Today's offices—comfortable, fully equipped, used for the entire workday, and storing substantial equipment—present a strong case for obligation. The accepted practice is therefore to affix mezuzos in offices, but without a *bracha*. The Sheivet Halevi (10:4) says that one who does recite a *bracha* has solid grounds to rely upon, and Agur Be'ahalecha (34 fn. 91) cites Rav Elyashiv as permitting a *bracha* even *lechat'chilah*.

Because many *poskim* hold that an office requires a mezuzah *mid'Oreisa*, moving the mezuzah from your home to the office is permitted, adducing also the view of those that permit transfer from a *de'Oreisa* doorway to a *de'Rabanan* doorway.

The *Rishonim* debate whether a renter's obligation in mezuzah is *mid'Oreisa* or *mid'Rabanan*, and the halacha appears to follow the latter view (Shu"t R' Akiva Eiger 1:61). So if you rent your office but own your home, moving the mezuzah from home to office would be a demotion and therefore a problem.

But a solution is available: Remove the mezuzah and replace it with a more *mehudar* one. According to Agur Be'ahalecha (40:50), replacing a mezuzah with one of a higher quality is permitted, even if the first one will then be placed in a *de'Rabanan* doorway.

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a *hefsek*. Moreover, why does the Rambam write that during each section of *Chazaras Hashatz* we blow only one set (*tashra"t*, *tasha"t*, or *2E tara"t*), if we don't know which is correct?

Sefer Derech Hamelech (R' Yaakov

Schneidman) answers that even the Rambam and Shulchan Aruch agree that all three shofar blast types are shofar sounds, and historically, each community used the type that corresponded to its particular needs that year. But they argue with Rav Hai Gaon and hold that if you blow the

sound that does not correspond to that year's needs, you are not *yotzei*. Because the associations between needs and *kolos* were forgotten over time, R' Avahu enacted that every community should blow all of the variants.



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