

HALOCHOSCOPE

cases one wishes to make a compote or puree from the whole cooked vegetables. Other situations include crushed items that have their own natural water content, but are thick. If they were crushed before *Shabbos*, there is major debate whether water or other liquid may be added on *Shabbos*. Some maintain that even without actually mixing it, simply adding the water can constitute *lash*. Evidently, a paste or mixture with its own water content can be considered a dough.

What remains to discuss is the status of the sprouted grains themselves. They have been altered by the sprouting process, as mentioned. However, as we have mentioned regarding *chametz*, as long as they remain edible, they do not lose their original status. A stage would be reached wherein the sprouted grain is no longer edible. Yet, as long as it is being used as a healthy form of the original grain, it must be considered bread grain.

In fact, there is some discussion on the *brocha* on beer. Though we recite *shehakol* on beer, the issue of its *mezonos* content is raised. This depends on the amount of malt in the beer, though some point out that even a minority ingredient of the five rain species can determine the *mezonos* status. Another issue is the fact that only the flavor of the malt is present. This can also determine the *brocha* of a liquid, if the way to consume the ingredient is by extracting its flavor in a water based form. Since the discussion exists, it is clear that the malt is still considered a *mezonos* type food, despite having sprouted. In fact, that discussion might even pertain to malt that has reached the stage of being inedible by itself, so that it can only be consumed as beer. Yet, its *brocha* would remain *mezonos*, were it not for the other factors making the beer's *brocha shehakol*.

Some commercially produced sprouted wheat breads have a *hashgacha*. One agency has stated that the *brocha* is *hamotzie*, though with no extensive discussion. Presumably, the product does not have added regular flour. The other option would be to eat such bread only during a meal based on regular bread. [See Brochos 35a 36a-38a Challah 2:5-6 Shabbos 19a 74a-b 76b 133a 134a 140a 143b-145a 155b Psachim 35a-37b Baba Basra 96b Zevachim 94b, etc Poskim. Sh'T Rosh 4:15. Tur Sh Ar OC 168 202:10-11 204:1 208:4-7 211:5 252:5 319:8 320:7 321:14-19 336:11 442:1 YD 324:1 3 327 329, commentaries. Star-K alerts November 2005.]

In conclusion, one recites *hamotzie* and *bircas hamazon* on sprouted wheat bread.

On the Parsha ... And he who comes into the house while it is [in a state of *nega*] shall remain defiled until evening. And he who lies down in the house shall cleanse his clothing, and he who eats in the house shall cleanse his clothing ... [14:15-16] These verbs are used to define the length of time that one must spend there in order to pass the defilement to his clothing – long enough to eat there reclining. Eating is defined as 'eating a half loaf of wheat bread, rather than barley bread, reclining and eating it with accompanying foods'. [Toras Kohanim, Malbim] This is where the Torah teaches us the length of time taken to 'eat' anything. Why teach it here? How do we know it refers to wheat bread specifically? The Torah refers to comfortable eating [R Hirsch]. Perhaps, in order to be punished appropriately by a *nega* on one's home, one must be restricted from the normal comforts of home. Eating a bread meal, and specifically wheat bread, is the paradigm of normal home comfort. This is why it has its own special *brochos*. It thus serves as the example of taking one's time for 'eating'.

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This week's question:

What is the correct *brocha* recited on wheat sprout bread?

The issues:

- A) The *brocha* on bread
- B) Other grain-based foods
- C) Sprouted wheat bread

A) *Hamotzie*

The basic conditions for *hamotzie* on a food are that it be made of the five bread grains, kneaded as a dough and baked in an oven. Additional conditions include the liquid content, the filling if any, the flavoring, the proportion of the flour, and sometimes, the consistency of the dough. The Torah defines *matzo* as *lechem oni*, bread of affliction. The same word *lechem* is used in the context of the *bircas hamazon* obligation, and of the *challah* obligation. Accordingly, the provisions for these three applications of the term are interchanged with each other.

Challah requires a dough. The thickness of dough and whether it is actually kneaded or simply mixed as a batter are discussed by the Talmud and poskim. *Matzo* must be made of the grains that could become *chametz* if left to leaven. Only five grains qualify for this, wheat, barley rye oats and spelt. Bread for a meal, by definition, is that which can be used to keep one alive. This refers to bread used as the basis of a meal, rather than as a snack food. Nonetheless, if one uses snack foods made of the same basic ingredients as bread in place of the bread at his meal, he would treat it like regular bread. Its *brochos* would be *hamotzie* and *bircas hamazon*.

B) Other grain-based foods

Foods of the same five grains that are not prepared as bread still have special status. If they are processed part of the way, such as made into flour or even dough, but then cooked outside an oven, they are called *maaseh kedairah*. Their *brochos* are *mezonos*, and *al hamichyah* after eating them. Most poskim maintain that this refers to cooking with a liquid medium, rather than spraying a pan with something to prevent sticking. This would refer to pastas and the like. Whole grains would be considered regular *ha'adamah* food. Most of the time, a whole grain loses some of its mass when cooked. This is considered similar to processing it. Therefore, cooked barley and oats would not be considered *ha'adamah* food, but *maaseh kedairah*. Raw flour can be eaten, especially as part of a mixture. However, it is not considered special, nor is the grain recognizable. Therefore, its *brocha* is *shehakol*. [See Halochoscope XII:13 for a full discussion with references.]

C) Sprouted wheat bread

Our question arises as a *sha'aylah* is due to the nature of the 'dough'. Regular dough is made by mixing flour and water. In the case of sprout bread, the 'dough' is mashed

sprouted grains. The grains are left to sprout 'tails' of up to twice the length of the original kernel. Normally, the sprouts themselves are not considered grains. They are like *shachas*, a young grass that can be eaten, or vegetable greens, and their *brocha* is *borei peri ha'adamah*. The kernel is still considered mostly intact. The sprouted kernel is mashed to a pulp due to its moisture content, together with the sprout. This is not a standard milling process. The entire softened moistened grain with its sprout is blended or mixed in a food-processor. There is no need to add water. The result is a 'dough'. Some add yeast and gluten to create a modified version of this 'bread', that looks much like regular bread. Thus, the milling process is skipped, and one produces a dough without using flour. This raises some questions about the status of the resulting bread.

The majority of the sprouted grain is debatable. The sprout is longer than the kernel, but might not have as much volume. Even if it has more volume, if the kernel retains its status as a grain, it overpowers a majority ingredient. In a regular dough, as long as the grain is the main component, even if it is in the minority, it controls the status of the *brocha*. This raises more questions about the status.

In our case, the kernel has been altered as well. The reason that the kernel is allowed to sprout is to enhance some of its nutritional properties. This is due to some physical changes. It is no longer milled into flour, but mashed. The moistened and softened kernel might thus have a new status as an edible green itself, apart from the sprouted tail. Does all of this mean that the 'bread' is really some kind of vegetable pudding? Is its *brocha* now *ha'adamah* or *shehakol*? Does any of this depend on the usage of the bread as a staple in meals, equivalent to regular bread?

In summary, our questions include: is there a requirement of flour, of regularly kneaded dough, or of a hard grain, to give something the status of bread? Is the major component here the grain, the sprout, both of them, are they separate entities or one entity, or is all of this irrelevant because the crushed grain constitutes flour or dough?

The question is actually more far-reaching. In terms of separating *challah* from a dough, one waits until the flour is completely mixed with the water. What if there is no actual flour or water? Is there any *challah* obligation? [This question is independent of the question of whether *challah* can apply if it does not qualify as a bread.] If it is produced commercially by a company owned by non-observant Jews, is there a concern whether *challah* was taken, or may one assume that there never was any obligation?

Apart from this, our case raises the issue of proportion of content. For the obligation of *challah*, one must have the minimum amount of flour content. Added ingredients do not count towards this minimum. Even adding bran or wheat-germ does not complement the minimum *shiur*. However, if one did not sift out the original bran or wheat-germ, it can usually be considered part of the *shiur*. What about the sprouts in our case? Assuming the mix is obligated in *challah*, are the sprouts part of the original grain, or must the grain be measured separately? In addition, to get the grains to sprout, it is ideal that the entire grain is intact, including its outer husk, that is not usually included in the milling of even wholewheat. What about the water content, that seems to be sufficient to make the dough? It would appear to be like added water. It seems that to be able to be sure about *challah* at all, one would need to measure the grain content before it is allowed to sprout, and account separately for the volume of husks.

On *Shabbos* there are two separate *melachos*, *tochain*, milling, and *lash*, kneading. While the process in our case is a form of *tochain*, there seems to be no kneading. Kneading requires a mixture of a liquid with a solid, rather than a crushing or blending process of one item. Of course, it is forbidden either way. However, knowing which *melachos* are involved helps in situations where a leniency might apply to one of them.

Wetting grains until they crack apart or split has always been part of the milling process. The Talmud describes *lesisah* as a process that can cause the grains to become *chametz*. It could also be done with hot water. In these cases, the intent is definitely not to sprout the grains. Sprouted grains seem to be undesirable for bread-making.

Sprouted grain is nothing new. Barley is sprouted and then dried to create malt. This is used in beer and to flavor various foods, or even as a main ingredient. Apparently, it can be sprouted a little, so that the result is considered fully edible, or it can be sprouted to the point that it is inedible by itself. It would then be used to make beer or whiskey. Its edibility is taken into account where the *halachic* status is changed due to this. For example, the poskim debate the status of whiskey on *Pesach*. Is it considered *chametz gamur*, absolute *chametz*, due to the malt content? Malt is inevitably *chametz*, since the barley grains are wet, they split, and even sprout. However, if the sprouts reach a point at which they could not be eaten by themselves, they might become *chametz nükshe*, partially leavened, as opposed to *chametz gamur*. This might change the status of the resulting brew or distilled brandy. Though it will still be forbidden, if it is considered less stringent than *chametz gamur*, leniencies might apply to its disposal or sale. It is 'milled'. Nonetheless, this refers to dried malted barley, that is ground in the normal manner.

Soaking grains and sprouted grains arise in various other contexts. Specifically, on *Shabbos* one may not sow seeds. One may not place grains into water, that was sometimes done to initiate the sprouting before sowing. From the context of this discussion it appears that sprouted grains were not desirable for milling. Even to feed animals, one might soften grains in water, but would remove them before they sprouted.

The matter of this bread does not appear to be addressed by the poskim. However, it is possible that such bread did exist. The issues that we raised did not arise in those days. It seems that the reason for this is the manner of mixing its dough, that has changed in modern times. Originally, when done by hand, the grains needed to be crushed before they were mixed into a ball of dough. During this process, inevitably, water would also be extracted. This was then mixed and kneaded back into the dough, much the same as regular dough. Thus, in terms of *hilchos Shabbos*, both *tochain* and *lash* would apply, with the additional issue of *sochet*, the *melacha* of extracting a liquid. This last issue is only forbidden in such cases if the liquid is removed as a separate entity. In cases where it is squeezed directly into a mixture with solids, it is permitted, with certain exceptions. Nonetheless, the discussion is enlightening for our case. The same process takes place in a blender, only faster, so that the water being mixed in might go unnoticed. Ultimately, a dough is made and baked into a real bread. There was wet flour and water.

This is actually discussed in regard to other foods being crushed and mixed on *Shabbos*. For example, crushing onions into a pulp involves the same process. Similarly, the issue arises with cooked vegetables that have absorbed water. Sometimes, one would wish to squeeze out the excess water while the vegetables are in the pan or bowl. In some