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are reviewed by Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita

Breakfast Cereals

Breakfast is a very important meal which fuels the body after it awakes from a full night's sleep. Although many people do not take the time to eat breakfast in the morning, skipping breakfast can diminish mental performance throughout the day. Breakfast helps a person concentrate, and one who eats breakfast will learn better because of it. One who does not eat breakfast is more likely to be tired during the day. Some people think that by skipping breakfast they will lose weight; however, this was proven false.

Introduction

In this issue we will learn the proper *berochos* to make on many kinds of cereals. There are a few simple rules which can be used to determine the proper *beracha* on breakfast cereals.

Pas Shacharis

Chazal knew the importance of breakfast long before any study was undertaken.

Before going to a *Bais Medrash* to learn, it is good to have *pas shacharis*.¹ The *Gemorah* in

*Bava Metziah*² says *pas shacharis* prevents eighty-three different sicknesses from afflicting a person. The *Tur*³ that says the reason for *pas shacharis* is to strengthen oneself to serve *Hashem* properly.

According to the basic reading of the *Shulchan Aruch* it seems that one should wash for bread every morning in order to have *pas shacharis*.⁴ However, many say one is not required to eat actual bread, and any food one eats in the morning is sufficient, as long as it is filling.⁵ Some say one should be careful to have a food that is *mezonos*.⁶ Breakfast cereals which are made from the five grains may be used as *pas shacharis* (i.e. Cheerios, Oatmeal, and Farina).⁷ Others say having a coffee in the morning is sufficient.⁸ The *shiur* for one who eats *pas*

Biriyim K'halacha pages 143-145. Some say it is a good custom (Shevet Ha'Levi 4:16, Divrei Shalom 4:74:2).

² 107b.

³ 155, Mishnah Berurah 1, Kaf Ha'chaim 26.

⁴ Chacham Tzvi 15:pages 50-51 (new).

⁵ Eishel Avraham Butchatch 155.

⁶ Pri Megadim M.Z. 1, Kaf Ha'chaim 23, Ohr L'tzyion 2:10:6, Rivevos Ephraim 3:590:21, 35.

⁷ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

⁸ Eishel Avraham Butchatch, Kaf Ha'chaim 23, Minhag Yisroel Torah 155:16. Some say it is *segula* to remember (Piskei Teshuvos 155:footnote 58, Kuntres Zichron Shneur 70:see 58).

¹ Mesechtas Bava Metziah 107b, Shulchan Aruch 155:2, Magen Avraham 3, Be'er Heitiv 2, Levush 2, Aruch Ha'shulchan 2. Refer to Bach 155, Elya Rabbah 2, Chaim

shacharis is a *k'beitzah*.⁹ One who has nothing to eat can drink water.¹⁰ Even one who is traveling should still try to have *pas shacharis*.¹¹

During Aseres Yemi Teshuva

There is a well known concept that during *aseres yemi teshuva* one should pick something that he does all year and be careful to refrain from doing it during *aseres yemi teshuva*. This is in order to realize that these days are different than all year and one has to do *teshuva*.¹² This only refers to things which are not prohibited to do according to the letter of the law.¹³ One of these items is refraining from eating *pas akum* (bread made by a non-Jewish baker).¹⁴ One who does not eat *pas akum* all year anyways should pick something else to be stringent with during these days. One who is traveling and can only buy *pas Yisroel*, if he goes more than 72 minutes away from where he is now may eat *pas akum* even during *aseres yemi teshuva*.¹⁵ The question regarding this *halacha* is does cereal fall into this category and if so should one refrain from eating it during the *aseres yemi teshuva*?

Some say refraining from something during these days is an obligation¹⁶ and others say it is a nice practice.¹⁷ *L'maseh*, one who does not

have this practice does not have to be condemned.¹⁸

Some *poskim* are of the opinion that since Cheerios look like bread¹⁹ one should not eat these products during the *aseres yemi teshuva*. However, others say that these items do not have an appearance of bread²⁰ and accordingly one would not have to refrain from eating them during *aseres yemi teshuva*.

L'maseh, there is an uncertainty if Cheerios has the appearance of bread and therefore, one should refrain from eating them during the *aseres yemi teshuva*.²¹

Rules

1. Any cereal whose basic ingredient is grain, wheat, oats, rice,²² spelt or rye is a *mezonos*.²³ However, if it is made from the outer shell (know as bran) it is a *shehakol* (as will be discussed later on in this issue).
2. Any cereal which is made from corn flour is a *shehakol*.²⁴
3. Any cereal which is made from real corn is a *hadama*. The cereal companies call this type of corn "milled corn."²⁵

⁹ M.Z. 155:1, Kaf Ha'chaim 29. Refer to Biur Halacha "yuchul."

¹⁰ Kaf Ha'chaim 29. Refer to Shar Ha'tzyion 155:3.

¹¹ Toras Haderech 6:15:page 75.

¹² Levush 603:1.

¹³ Aruch Ha'shulchan 603:2.

¹⁴ Rosh Hashanah 4:14, Tur 603, Shulchan Aruch 603:1, Levush 1, Shach Y.D. 112:9, Darchei Teshuva Y.D. 112:38, Aruch Ha'shulchan 603:1, Kaf Ha'chaim 1. Horav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l said that one should concentrate on the meaning of *davening* during these days (Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:3:4:footnote 13).

¹⁵ Mishnah Berurah 1.

¹⁶ Nachlas Shiva 72:page 32, Matei Ephraim 603:1.

¹⁷ Chai Adom 143:1, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 130:2, Aruch Ha'shulchan 2, Chelkes Binyonim Y.D. 112:footnote 100.

¹⁸ Refer to Igros Moshe O.C. 3:12, Diyunei Halachos 2:pages 581-582.

¹⁹ Opinions of Horav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l and Horav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Vezos Ha'beracha page 192 (4th edition). Refer to ibid: (5th edition: page 219) where he says only Grape Nuts have an appearance of bread. Horav Elyashiv Shlita says that Cheerios has a *tzura* of bread (Rabbi Felder Shlita).

²⁰ The opinion of Horav Sheinberg Shlita quoted in Vezos Ha'beracha page 192 (4th edition).

²¹ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

²² There is no difference if the rice is cooked or baked. Refer to Shulchan Aruch 208:7, Shar Hatzyion 31.

²³ Shulchan Aruch O.C. 208:7.

²⁴ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita

²⁵ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

4. There is a rule in *hilchos berochos* that any food which contains a *mezonos* grain requires a *mezonos*.²⁶ This is only if the grain is put in to give the food taste, however, if it is only put in to keep the food intact (known as a binder) then the *beracha* would be a *shehakol*, etc.²⁷

Bishul Akum

There are two ways for a food to be exempt from a *bishul akum* status. 1. If it is a food which can be eaten raw so the cooking of the non-Jew does not do anything to the food.²⁸ 2. If it is a food which is not fit to be served on a king's table,²⁹ which in our days is food which is not served at the smorgasbord at a wedding.³⁰

Breakfast cereal is not considered a food which is served on a king's table, and therefore does not require *bishul Yisroel*.³¹

Milk

Milk which is placed in cereal does not require its own *beracha* since most people add milk to their cereal to make it easier to eat.³² The small amount of milk which is leftover after one finishes eating the cereal also does not require its own *beracha*.³³ One who specifically added milk into the bowl after one finished eating the

cereal would recite a separate *beracha* on the milk.³⁴

Raisins-Bananas

Raisins and bananas which are added to cereal do not require their own *beracha* since they are as a *tofel* to the cereal.³⁵ If one wants to eat the raisins or bananas because he likes them then he would recite a *beracha* on them in addition to the *beracha* on cereal.³⁶

Oven Puffed Crisp Rice

Crisp rice cereals are made by a process called oven puffing. The *beracha* on such cereal is *mezonos* and the *beracha achrona* is a *boreh nefoshos*.³⁷

How to tell if grain is a Binder

As mentioned before *mezonos* grain added to a food as a binder plays no role in determining the *beracha*. However, how is it possible for one to tell if the *mezonos* grain was added for taste or as a binder? One can tell by looking at the ingredient panel. If the *mezonos* grain is placed in the first three or four ingredients then it is placed there for taste. If it is placed beyond that in the ingredient list then it is generally there to act as a binder.³⁸ The following cereals have *mezonos* grain added for taste: Alpha Bits, Honey Combs, Froot Loops, and Apple Jacks.³⁹ An example of a cereal which adds the *mezonos* grain ingredients as a binder is Captain Crunch.⁴⁰

²⁶ Shulchan Aruch O.C 208:2.

²⁷ Mishnah Berurah 208:49, 212:1, see Vezos Haberacha page 110-111. For this reason licorice and sour sticks are *shehakol* even though the product contains wheat (Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita).

²⁸ Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 113:1.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

³¹ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. Refer to OU Document A-94, see Pischei Halacha (Kashrus) page 118:3 quoting the opinion of the author of the Be'er Moshe (Stern), Bishul Yisroel pages 177-178, Teshuvos from Horav Falk in sefer *ibid*: pages 29-31.

³² Igros Moshe O.C. 4:43, Pischei Halacha (Berochos) 7:38, pages 46 302:45, and 303, Ohr L'tzyion 2:46:41.

³³ Pischei Halacha *ibid*, Piskei Teshuvos 208:footnote 78.

³⁴ Pischei Halacha *ibid*, see Igros Moshe *ibid*.

³⁵ Pischei Halacha (Berochos) 7:38, page 302:45, Vezos Haberacha page 199.

³⁶ Igros Moshe O.C. 4:43, see Pischei Halacha 7:footnote 61.

³⁷ V'sein Beracha page 526.

³⁸ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. Refer to Vezos Haberacha page 201. If one is in doubt, he should call the company and ask if the ingredient is there as a binder or for taste.

³⁹ Vezos Haberacha page 202.

⁴⁰ Star-K in Kashrus Kurrents Fall 2006.

Corn Flakes

The *beracha* on corn flakes would depend on what type of corn is used.⁴¹ If corn flour is used it would be a *shehakol*,⁴² and if milled corn is used it would be a *hadama*.⁴³

Bran

Bran is the outer shell of grain, and its *beracha* is *shehakol*,⁴⁴ even if it is cooked.⁴⁵ Therefore, the *beracha* on All Bran is *shehakol*.⁴⁶ However, the *beracha* on Bran Flakes is a *mezonos* because the bran is mixed with *mezonos* grain.⁴⁷

Puffed Wheat

There is a dispute in the *poskim* on what *beracha* to make on puffed wheat,⁴⁸ which is wheat that is not cooked but is popped with heat. Some say that one should only eat this food during a meal of bread.⁴⁹ The consensus of the majority of the *poskim* is that the *beracha* is a *mezonos*. This has ramifications regarding the *beracha* on Sugar Crisps⁵⁰ and Honey Smacks. *Horav*

*Moshe Feinstein zt"l*⁵¹ said one can either make a *mezonos* or *hadama*, and the *beracha achrona* is a *boreh nefoshos*.

Beracha Achrona

In order for one to recite *al hamichya* on cereal a *k'zayis* of *mezonos* grain has to be eaten *bekedei achilas peras*. Since this is usually difficult to accomplish, one should recite a *boreh nefoshos* even after eating *mezonos* grain.⁵²

Grape Nuts

This cereal is made with bread ingredients but since one is not *koveah seuda* on it the *beracha* is a *mezonos*.⁵³

Corn Pops

In the United States the corn used to produce Corn Pops are real pieces of corn, and therefore, the *beracha* is a *hadama*.⁵⁴

Crispix

Crispix is made with corn on one side and rice on the other. Although some say to make two *berochos* on it (*hadama* and *mezonos*),⁵⁵ the custom is to recite a *shehakol* only.⁵⁶

Cooked Cereals

The *beracha* on cooked cereal is a *mezonos* if it is made with wheat or oatmeal. If the consistency is so loose that one can drink it then the *beracha* is a *shehakol*.⁵⁷

The "K" on Kellogg's

A "K" exists on Kellogg's cereals. Normally a "K" placed on foods means that the company

⁴¹ Pnei Ha'shulchan page 86.

⁴² Be'er Moshe 5:53, Shevet Ha'Levi 8:36, Ohr L'tzyion 2:46:41, Sheiros Yosef 3:page 325, Pischei Halacha (Berochos) page 346, Piskei Teshuvos 202:21, see Igros Moshe E.H. 1:114.

⁴³ L'Torah V'horah 6:page 28, Opinion of Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l quoted in Divrei Chachumim page 72:8, Ohr L'tzyion 2:46:41, Pischei Halacha (Berochos) page 346, Piskei Teshuvos 202:21:footnote 16. See Vezos Haberacha page 379:103 who brings an opinion in the *poskim* who says that corn flakes is a *shehakol* even if it is made with milled corn.

⁴⁴ Igros Moshe E.H. 1:114, Avnei Yushfei 3:22:2. The opinion of Horav Sheinberg Shlita is that is a *mezonos*.

⁴⁵ Ve'aleihu Lo Yeibol 1:page 111:142.

⁴⁶ Vezos Haberacha page 202, Star-K in Kashrus Kurrents Fall 2006.

⁴⁷ Vezos Haberacha page 202.

⁴⁸ Refer to Shulchan Aruch 208:4, Mishnah Berurah 15, Shar Ha'tzyion 20, L'torah V'horah 6:pages 15-28, Ohr L'tzyion 2:14:21, Pischei Halacha (Berochos) 8:footnote 125, Vezos Haberacha page 105.

⁴⁹ Mishnah Berurah 15.

⁵⁰ Igros Moshe O.C. 4:44.

⁵¹ Igros Moshe O.C. 4:44.

⁵² Igros Moshe E.H. 1:114. Refer to Star-K's website for which cereals require *al hamichya*.

⁵³ Refer to Pischei Halacha (Berochos) page 289:37, Star-K in Kashrus Kurrents *ibid*.

⁵⁴ Star-K in Kashrus Kurrents Fall *ibid*.

⁵⁵ Star-K in Kashrus Kurrents *ibid*.

⁵⁶ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

⁵⁷ Shulchan Aruch 208:6, see V'sein Beracha page 532, Sharei Ha'beracha page 550:footnote 17.

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says there is supervision. Since the supervising agency is not specified, the generic “K” can not be relied upon.⁵⁸ However, in the case of Kellogg’s the “K” is actually the *Vaad*

Harabanim of New England which can be relied upon.⁵⁹

Dairy Equipment

Many cereals have an OU-D on them either because they contain dairy ingredients or because they are manufactured on dairy equipment.⁶⁰ It is difficult to specify which OU-D’s are due to actual dairy ingredients and which are due to dairy equipment since cereals are constantly being reformulated.⁶¹ One who has any questions regarding a specific cereal should contact the OU. Some say one who is careful not to eat *cholov stam* can still eat something which is made on dairy equipment.⁶² The *Star-K* reports that currently Honeycomb and Golden Crisp are made on dairy equipment.⁶³

List of Common Mezonos Cereals:

Alpha Bits⁶⁴

Apple Jacks⁶⁵

Cinnamon Toast Crunch⁶⁶

Cheerios⁶⁷

Clusters⁶⁸

Cocoa Krispies⁶⁹

Cocoa Pebbles⁷⁰

Crunchy Corn Bran⁷¹

Double Chex⁷²

Fiber One⁷³

French Toast Crunch⁷⁴

Froot Loops⁷⁵

Fruity Pebbles⁷⁶

Golden Grahams⁷⁷

Honey Bunches of Oats⁷⁸

Honey Combs⁷⁹

Life⁸⁰

Raisin Bran⁸¹

⁶⁷ Document from OU Rabbi who supervises General Mills, *Star-K* in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos. Refer to *Pischei Halacha* (Berochos) page 289:letter 37, *V’sein Beracha* page 528. The opinion of Horav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt”l is that one should not be *koveah seuda* on them because it has the appearance of bread (*V’sein Beracha* pages 527-528).

⁶⁸ Document from OU Rabbi who supervises General Mills.

⁶⁹ *Star-K* in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos.

⁷⁰ *Star-K* in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos, *The Laws of Brochos* page 364.

⁷¹ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. Refer to OU document X-63, *The Laws of Brochos* page 366.

⁷² *The Laws of Brochos* page 366.

⁷³ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. Others say it is a *shehakol* (*The Laws of Brochos* page 367, *Star-K* in *Kashrus Kurrents* ibid).

⁷⁴ Document from OU Rabbi who supervises General Mills, *Star-K* in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos

⁷⁵ *Star-K* in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos, *The Laws of Brochos* page 368.

⁷⁶ *Star-K* in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos, *The Laws of Brochos* page 368.

⁷⁷ Document from OU Rabbi who supervises General Mills, *The Laws of Brochos* page 368.

⁷⁸ *Star-K* in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos

⁷⁹ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. The *Star-K* in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos says it is a *shehakol*.

⁸⁰ *Star-K* in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos, *The Laws of Brochos* page 372.

⁵⁸ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

⁵⁹ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

⁶⁰ They are Basic Four, Cinnamon Grahams, French Toast Crunch, Golden Grahams, Raisin Nut Bran, Wheaties. (Document from OU Rabbi who supervises General Mills).

⁶¹ Based on a discussion with the Rabbi who supervises the production of cereals at General Mills.

⁶² Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita in the name of Horav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt”l. Horav Yisroel Belsky is stringent for himself in this issue.

⁶³ In their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos.

⁶⁴ *Star-K* in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos, *The Laws of Brochos* page 359.

⁶⁵ *Star-K* in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos.

⁶⁶ *The Laws of Brochos* page 364.

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Raisin Nut Bran⁸²
Rice Chex⁸³
Rice Crispies⁸⁴
Shredded Wheat⁸⁵
Special K⁸⁶
Wheat Chex⁸⁷
Wheaties⁸⁸

List of Common *Shehakol* Cereals:

All Bran⁸⁹
Bran Chex⁹⁰
Captain Crunch⁹¹
Cocoa Puffs⁹²
Cookie Crisp⁹³
Corn Chex⁹⁴
Corn Flakes (corn flour)
Corn Total⁹⁵
Kix⁹⁶

Reese's Peanut Butter Puffs⁹⁷
Trix⁹⁸

List of Common *Hadama* Cereals:

Corn Flakes (milled corn)⁹⁹
Corn Pops¹⁰⁰
Frosted Flakes¹⁰¹

Kemach Brand Cereals¹⁰²

Bran Flakes- *Mezonos*
Bunch O'Krunch- *Shehakol*
Chocho Chippers- *Shehakol*
Corn Flakes- *Shehakol*
Crisp Rice- *Mezonos*
Fruit Whirls- *Mezonos*
Honey Nut Toasted Oats- *Mezonos*
Raisin Bran- *Mezonos*
Sugar Frosted Flakes- *Shehakol*
Toasted Oats- *Mezonos*
Whole Wheat Flakes- *Mezonos*

⁸¹ Opinion of Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l quoted in Divrei Chachumim page 72:10, Pischei Halacha (Berochos) 7:footnote 62

⁸² Document from OU Rabbi who supervises General Mills, Star-K in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos

⁸³ Star-K in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos

⁸⁴ L'torah V'horah 2:page 13, Vezos Haberacha 203, Rivevos Ephraim 5:144.

⁸⁵ Star-K in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos.

⁸⁶ The Laws of Brochos page 381.

⁸⁷ V'sein Beracha page 528.

⁸⁸ Star-K in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos.

⁸⁹ Star-K in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos.

⁹⁰ The Laws of Brochos page 360.

⁹¹ Star-K in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos.

⁹² Document from OU Rabbi who supervises General Mills, The Laws of Brochos page 364.

⁹³ Document from OU Rabbi who supervises General Mills.

⁹⁴ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Laws of Brochos page 365. Others say it is a *hadama* (Star-K in Kashrus Kurrents ibid).

⁹⁵ Document from OU Rabbi who supervises General Mills, The Laws of Brochos page 365.

⁹⁶ V'sein Beracha page 528, Document from OU Rabbi who supervises General Mills, Star-K in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos, Diyunei Halachos 1:pages 260-263.

⁹⁷ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. Refer to Document from OU Rabbi who supervises General Mills.

⁹⁸ Document from OU Rabbi who supervises General Mills. Refer to Diyunei Halachos 1:pages 260-263.

⁹⁹ V'sein Beracha page 524, Star-K in Kashrus Kurrents ibid.

¹⁰⁰ The Laws of Brochos page 365, Star-K in Kashrus Kurrents ibid.

¹⁰¹ Star-K in their list on popular Cereals and their Berochos, The Laws of Brochos page 368.

¹⁰² All the information regarding these *berochos* were taken from the Star-K ibid.

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► *Halachically Speaking* is a bi-weekly publication compiled by Rabbi Moishe Dovid Lebovits, Rabbinical Administrator for the Kof-K Kosher Supervision.

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