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Brochos for Breakfast

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STAR-K KASHRUS ADMINISTRATOR

One of the profound aspects of our *Torah Hakdosha* is the ability for anyone, regardless of age or wisdom, to appreciate the *Torah* on his or her own level. For example, the *posuk* “*B’reishis Barah Elokim*” is studied by the greatest *Torah* scholars, as well as first grade children. This concept is also applicable to *Hilchos Brochos*. To a first grader studying for a *Brochos* Bee, or a Talmudic scholar studying *Perek Kaitzad Mevorchim* in *Masechta Brochos*, learning about *brochos* can be fascinating.

A daily and extremely relevant application of this principle lies in the area of *brochos* on breakfast cereals. What makes determining the correct *brochos* for these products so complicated? Technological advances in food manufacturing have had a great impact on *Hilchos Brochos*. A slight difference in production, or even in the manufacturer’s intention of the use of ingredients, can change the *brocha*. As will be explained, cereals such as puffed wheat or corn flakes produced by different companies may look the same to the consumer. However, they may be manufactured differently, thereby changing the *brocha* recited. Often, this background information is not available to the consumer; hence, the confusion and intrigue in discovering what goes on “behind the scenes” and its impact on *Hilchos Brochos*.

To ensure the highest Kashrus standards, Star-K Kosher Certification inspects many food plants throughout the world. By doing this, the Star-K has the opportunity to either see or discuss manufacturing procedures that have a direct impact on the *brochos* of various food items. The following information is what has been obtained by *Kashrus* professionals or heard from company personnel and then presented to the Star-K Rabbinic Administrator, Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, *shlita*, for his *Halachic* insights and *psak halacha*.

I. *Chameishes Minei Dagan Cereals*

Special *halachic* status has been given to products coming from *chameishes minei dagan*, the five special grains: wheat, spelt, barley, oats, and rye.¹ When these grains are ground up, mixed with water, and baked into cake, cookies, crackers and other *pas haba’ah b’kisinin* products, the *brocha* is *Mezonos* and the *brocha achrona* is *Al Hamichya*. If one is *koveya seudah* (eats enough to constitute a meal), the *brocha* is *Hamotzi* and one must recite *Birchas Hamazon*.² One of the definitions of *pas haba’ah b’kisinin* is that the dough is baked into a hardened crispy product. Products such as pretzels and Post Grape Nuts cereal³ are included in this category of *pas haba’ah b’kisinin*, and their *brocha* is *Mezonos*. The *brocha* on Cheerios, Wheaties, and Shredded Wheat cereals is also *Mezonos*, and the *brocha achrona* is *Al Hamichya*.

In the above cases, the *chameishes minei dagan* is broken down. However, if the grains remain whole and are simply roasted, they are no different from any other variety of produce which grows from the ground (e.g., corn), and the *brocha* is *Hoadama*.⁴ What this means is as follows: The *brocha* on unprocessed and slightly processed (e.g., toasted whole) wheat or oats is *Hoadama*. The *brocha* on fully

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Analyzing the Roots: Hydroponics and Halacha

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The AeroGarden is a unique hydroponic system, enabling home-growing of vegetables. (See sidebar on page 3). The entrance of this system into the marketplace presents an opportunity to discuss the history and *halachos* of hydroponics.

According to some accounts, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon were hydroponically grown. The gardens hung strikingly from palace terraces and were considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The gardens were supposedly constructed by *Nevuchadnetzar* around 600 BCE in present-day Iraq, about 30 miles south of Baghdad.¹ However, there is a lively discussion among historians as to who built the gardens, how they were planted, and indeed whether these gardens existed at all. The *Talmud* (*Avoda Zara* 38b) itself discusses the hydroponic sprouting of seeds, in what seems to have been a fairly common practice.

More recently, in the 1930’s, Dr. William Gericke of the University of California conducted research with hydroponics. He coined the term “hydroponics”, derived from the Greek words, *hydro* (water) and *ponos* (labor), or “water-working.” Put simply, it means growing plants in a nutrient solution without soil. The science of hydroponics proved that soil is merely the holder of the nutrients, the place where the plant roots traditionally live and a base of support for the plant structure. Soil isn’t required for plant growth. The elements, minerals and nutrients that soil contains

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Analyzing the Roots: Hydroponics & Halacha



RABBI ZVI GOLDBERG

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such as carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and magnesium can be supplied in liquid solutions. Plants are supported by porous material, such as sand, gravel, foam or glass wool that acts as a wick in relaying the nutrient solution from its source to the roots.

In 1945, the United States Air Force built one of the first large hydroponic farms on Ascension Island, a barren island in the South Atlantic, followed by additional farms on Iwo Jima and Okinawa in the Pacific. These hydroponic farms helped to supply fresh vegetables to troops stationed in these areas. Over the past few decades, researchers in Israel have been at the forefront of hydroponic study.²

Presently, the most common hydroponic crop grown in the United States is tomatoes, followed by cucumbers, lettuce, herbs, and peppers. In addition, every day many hydroponic vegetables are brought in from Canada, Mexico and Europe.

Now let's discuss the various *halachos* which are applicable to the AeroGarden, and to hydroponics in general.

Brocha

The *brocha* on hydroponically grown vegetables is *Shehakol*.³ The *brocha* of *Hoadama* is applicable only to vegetables which actually grow from the *adama*, the earth.⁴ As noted above, many commercially sold tomatoes are grown hydroponically. Still, unless one knows definitively that the produce was grown hydroponically, one should assume it was earth-grown and recite *Hoadama*.⁵ It is important to note that Israeli exported greenhouse grown romaine lettuce (Alei Katif brand) is not grown hydroponically. The *brocha* on these vegetables is *Hoadama*.

Insects

Star-K's certification of the AeroGarden is essentially a statement that the system is an appropriate method of controlling insects in produce. Plants grown under controlled conditions indoors are generally free from

insects which are commonly found in outdoor grown plants.⁶ However, we cannot guarantee that vegetables grown with the kit will be insect-free. Insects which commonly thrive indoors may find their way onto the vegetables. In addition, in rare cases, insects could possibly land on the plants by entering the home on clothes or other vegetables. For these reasons, a cursory inspection and a washing of the vegetables before use is advised. As an additional precaution against infestation, Star-K is working with AeroGrow to offer a mesh covering as an accessory to the kit. One may improvise and fashion his



own insect barrier by covering the garden with mesh or a cloth.

In addition to romaine and other types of lettuce, one can grow herbs such as cilantro, dill, and parsley. Herbs are especially prone to infestation, are difficult to check, and are not widely available to the kosher consumer as 'certified insect-free'. The kit is helpful in controlling infestation for these varieties.

Hydroponically grown vegetables (lettuce, herbs, etc.) sold commercially without kosher certification should be thoroughly checked since they grow under conditions unknown to the consumer.

Shabbos/Yom Tov

Nurturing plants is one of the 39

melachos, prohibited categories of work on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*. Therefore, on those days the seeds may not be placed in their base, nor may nutrients or water be added.⁷ There are also restrictions on some *melachos* on *Chol Hamoed*. One should therefore ensure that the proper nutrients and water are added before the onset of *Yom Tov* so that there is no need to add them on *Chol Hamoed*.

The vegetables may not be harvested on *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov* due to the prohibition of *kotzer*, reaping.⁸ On *Chol Hamoed*, they may be harvested for *Chol Hamoed* or *Yom Tov* use.

Although the AeroGarden lights go on and off during *Shabbos*, this is permitted since the system is automated without further input.⁹

Israel

Due to the special status of *Eretz Yisroel*, generally vegetables grown there must have *ma'asros*, tithes, separated. However, if the AeroGarden kit is used to grow vegetables in *Eretz Yisroel*, *ma'asros* need not be separated from the vegetables. This is because hydroponically grown vegetables are free from the obligation to separate *ma'asros*.¹⁰ In addition, they may be grown during the Sabbatical year of *Shmitta*.¹¹

On a related note, if the seeds in the kits were to come from *Eretz Yisroel*, the seeds would not be subject to the laws of *ma'asros* or *Shmitta*. These seeds are not edible seeds, and the *Mishnah* in *Ma'asros* 5:8 states that non-edible seeds are not subject to *ma'asros* or *Shmitta*.¹² In any event, Star-K has determined that the AeroGarden seeds are not from *Eretz Yisroel*.

Marror

Hydroponic romaine lettuce should not be used for *marror* at the *Pesach Seder*.¹³ The reasoning for this is as follows: It is unclear whether the *brocha* of *Hamotzi* relieves one of the obligation to recite a *brocha* on *marror*. Although *marror* is eaten during the meal, it is not a 'meal food' eaten to satisfy hunger

¹This would be around the time he destroyed the *Beis Hamikdash*. It is said that they were built to cheer up his wife – a native of a lush region full of vegetation, who found the dry Babylonian scenery dispiriting.

²In 1982, Dr. Hillel Sofer, senior researcher at the Volcani Institute at Ein Gedi, developed the aero-hydroponic method, which increases oxygen to the plant roots by suspending the roots in air. The AeroGarden uses this methodology.

³Rav Ovadia Yosef (*Yechaveh Da'as* 6:12), Rav Chanoch Zundel Grossberg, (*Siddur Minchas Yerushalayim* p. 334), Rav Eliyahu Falk (*Machazeh Eliyahu siman* 28). All cite the *Chaye Adam* 51:17, who discusses vegetables grown in soil in a flowerpot (*sh'aino na'kuv*, without holes on the bottom). *Chaye Adam* rules that the *brocha* is *Shehakol*, since it is not nourished by the soil in the ground. Although some disagree with the *Chaye Adam* on that point, his ruling provides strong support for reciting *Shehakol* on vegetables grown in water, which is even further distinguished from earth grown vegetables.

⁴There are opinions (Rav Shmuel Vozner *Sheivet HaLevi* 1:205, Rav Moshe Shternbuch

Teshuvos V'hanhagos 2:149) that the proper *brocha* on hydroponic vegetables is *Hoadama*, as *Hoadama* is recited over any vegetable which normally grows from the ground. (Rav Shternbuch writes that *Chaye Adam* only referred to *Hamotzi*, which could not be recited on bread made from wheat grown in a flowerpot. However, this argument is difficult to support, as *Chaye Adam* refers specifically to *Hoadama*. Also see *Nishmas Adam* 152:1 where the *Chaye Adam* explicitly links the two *brochos*.)

⁵*Yechaveh Da'as* 6:12.

⁶A test of the system in the Star-K offices produced lettuce which was insect-free.

⁷*Shulchan Aruch O.C.* 336:11. See *Minchas Chinuch* 32 and *Teshuvos Har Tzvi* (*Zeraim* 2:31).

⁸*Shulchan Aruch O.C.* 336:5, *Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasa* 26:4, *Machazeh Eliyahu* 31.

⁹Even Rav Moshe Feinstein (*Igros Moshe* OC 4:60), who disapproved of 'Shabbos clocks', still permitted their use for lighting.



Hydroponics and Halacha

and may still require its own *brocha*. To circumvent this issue, the *halacha* states that *Hoadama* on the *karpas* is recited while having in mind to exempt the *marror*.¹⁴ However, the *brocha* on hydroponic lettuce is *Shehakol*; thus, the *Hoadama* on *karpas* would not be applicable to the lettuce. This would place one in the questionable position of saying *Shehakol* on the lettuce. To avoid this dilemma, hydroponic lettuce should not be used for *marror*.¹⁵

Nutrient Tablets

Star-K has determined that the nutrient tablets used in the AeroGarden system pose no kosher issues. Nevertheless, even if the nutrient tablets would be non-kosher, the plants would still be kosher. Normally, items that have a non-kosher source of nutrition are, themselves, considered non-kosher. However, the rule of *zeh v'zeh gorem* states that if the nutrition is comprised of kosher and non-kosher components, the resulting animal or plant is kosher.¹⁶ In any garden, including the AeroGarden, the water is kosher so the kosher status of the nutrients has no effect.

From early history to modern times, hydroponics has offered an alternative to earth-grown produce. It is yet another way to appreciate the bountiful world *Hashem* has bestowed upon us.¹⁷

¹⁰ Rav Yechiel Michel Tuchetzinski (Zeriah 3:4) and others cited in *Mishpatei Aretz* (Terumos 1:19). *Teshuvos Har Tzvi* (Zeraim 2:31), however, requires *ma'asros*. See also discussion in *Derech Emunah* (Terumos chap. 2, *Beiur Halacha* s.v. *Ochel*).

¹¹ *Yechaveh Da'as* (6:12) citing Rav Yechiel Michel Tuchetzinski (*Sefer Ha'Shmitta* vol 2:pg 104), *Sefer Nechpeh B'kesef* (Y.D. 1:5) cited by *Minchas Shlomo* (vol 3, 158:8), Rav Binyamin Zilber (*Az Nidbiru* 4:51). Rav Zilber emphasizes that his ruling applies only in cases where the plant is not in any earth or even chemical fertilizer. The *Chazon Ish* is also quoted as having permitted hydroponics during *Shmitta*. *Maharil Diskin*, cited by *Minchas Shlomo*, forbids all hydroponics during *Shmitta*, as does *Har Tzvi* (Zeraim 2:31).

¹² The *Rambam* (*Peirush Ha'mishnayos*) writes, based on the *Mishnah*, that even if the seeds come from vegetables which themselves have been set aside as *teruma*, the plants which grow from these non-edible seeds are not *teruma*. We do not apply the rule of *gidulei teruma teruma*. See also *Rashash*.

¹³ Also see *Pesachim* 39a, *ma matza gidulei karka af marror gidulei karka*, implying that *marror* must be earth-grown. However, this may mean only that *marror* must be a type of food which normally grows from the earth. See *Mikraei Kodesh Pesach* 2:12.

¹⁴ *Mishnah Brura* 473:55, *Aruch Hashulchan* 473:18.

¹⁵ Although horseradish may warrant a *brocha* of *Shehakol* when eaten raw, yet it is used for *marror*, on *Pesach* night its *brocha* is likely *Hoadama* since it is eaten to fulfill the *halachic* requirement (see *Beiur Halacha* 575:2). However, the *brocha* on hydroponic lettuce remains *Shehakol*, even on *Pesach* night.

¹⁶ *Shulchan Aruch* Y.D. 142:11. See also *Shach* Y.D. 60:1 quoting *Tosafos* (*Avodah Zara* 49a) regarding plants grown on *issur achilah*.

¹⁷ There are other *halachic* areas where it is relevant to discuss whether hydroponics is *gidulei karka* — leaving *peah*; *tochen* and *imur* on *Shabbos*; buying food with *ma'aser sheni* money; a *poel* eating from produce; and *s'chach*. We plan to cover these issues in the future.

HOW DOES YOUR KOSHER GARDEN GROW?

by Margie Pensak

The bug stops here, in the privacy of your own kitchen, thanks to **The AeroGarden**, certified by Star-K Certification. Kosher consumers, with green and brown thumbs alike, can now farm their own vegetables and herbs year-round on their kitchen counter. Providing a controlled growing environment, The AeroGarden allows you to control insect infestation of leafy greens and herbs. Placing crop production into the hands of the everyday kosher consumer is a major boon.

The AeroGrow International, Inc. product, created by entrepreneur Michael Bissonnette, is a revolutionary kitchen garden appliance. Using NASA-tested aeroponic technology, it grows harvests of organic-based 100% natural garden fresh lettuce, tomatoes and herbs, faster and more reliably than other methods--without soil, weeds, or mess.

The indoor electric garden suspends the plants' roots in moist air and frequently bathes them with nutrient-enriched water, allowing them to mature faster than those grown in soil. Its equipment features sun-spectrum lights and an automated nutrient and water delivery system. After simply dropping the seed containers into the base and adding water and time-release nutrient tablets, the "smart" garden takes over. The grow lights and nutrient delivery are automatically adjusted according to the crop. Since no natural sunlight is needed, the plants can be grown wherever there is electricity.

The AeroGarden crops require minimal tending--minutes a month. Since the plants grow in an indoor environment, they thrive year-round. They can be left unattended for up to two weeks, depending on the type of plants and their maturity, a plus for the Sabbath/Yom Tov observant and vacationers, alike.

Presently, the seed kit varieties include: salad greens (a proprietary mix of seven types of lettuce), herbs (cilantro, chives, Italian basil, Red Rubin basil, dill, mint, and parsley), basil (including a mix of international varieties), as well as cherry tomatoes, chili peppers, and petunias. The company hopes to add strawberries, as well as other herb offerings and flowers in the near future.

Telephone 1-800-GROW NOW, or visit www.aerogrow.com, to learn more and order this unique Star-K certified growing system.



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processed wheat and oats (e.g., flour and water that is baked) is *Mezonos*. The question the *poskim* address is-- at what point are the wheat and oats considered processed enough to recite a *Mezonos*?⁵

To understand this, it is important to know the following: Wheat has four parts—the endosperm, husk, bran, and germ. Endosperm makes up the majority of the kernel and is the primary source of flour, bread, and cake. The husk, wheat's outer shell, comes off easily by threshing. The husk, which is always removed, has no nutritional value and is not used for human consumption, domestically. The remaining kernel (with endosperm, germ and bran) is called “whole wheat.”

If the whole wheat is puffed, the *brocha* remains *Hoadama*. An example of this is Kashi 7 Whole Grain Puffs.⁶ This is a unique cereal which includes *chameishes minei dagan* with all the bran remaining on the kernels, whose grains are puffed. Similarly, Go Lean is made up of Kashi puffed grains⁷; hence, the *brocha* is *Hoadama*.⁸

The process for most other puffed wheat is to first remove bran from the kernel through a process known as pearling. In this process, some endosperm may also incidentally be removed. The kernel is then placed into a pressurized heated chamber and steamed. The moisture rushes out of the kernel, thereby “popping” it.

There are different opinions as to which *brocha* is recited. Some opinions say this is processed enough to become *Mezonos*. This *psak* is based on the *Mishnah Brura* which says one can recite a *Mezonos* on pearled barley,⁹ a product that is similar to puffed wheat.¹⁰ Others are of the opinion that regular puffed wheat is not processed

enough, and the *brocha* is *Hoadama*. In order to be *Mezonos*, the product must be a “*ma'aseh kedaira*”, similar to a bowl of oatmeal in which the grains stick together. In puffed wheat this does not occur, so the *brocha* is *Hoadama*.¹¹

Lhalacha, puffed wheat should ideally be eaten in the middle of a bread meal. Otherwise, Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt”l*,¹² says one can recite either a *Mezonos* or *Hoadama*. Rav Moshe also says the *brocha achrona* on puffed wheat is *Borei Nefashos*.¹³ This *halacha* applies also to Kellogg's Honey Smacks and Post Golden Crisp.¹⁴

Wheat germ is the “embryo” of the kernel. It is heated to deactivate enzymes which would allow sprouting. It is generally eaten with other foods and would usually be *tofel*, secondary to the other ingredients in the product. If one eats wheat germ by itself the *brocha* is *Hoadama*, since the heating is only applied to deactivate the enzymes, not to cook the germ.¹⁵ It is not processed enough to become *Mezonos* and the *brocha* remains *Hoadama*.

The *brocha* on bran is *Shehakol*.¹⁶ Therefore, the *brocha* on Kellogg's All Bran cereal is *Shehakol*,¹⁷ and the *brocha achrona* is *Borei Nefashos*.

II. Non-Chameishes Minei Dagan Cereals

The *brocha* on produce that grows from the ground is *Borei P'ri Hoadama*. For example, the *brocha* on corn and potatoes is *Hoadama*. However, if the produce is ground into flour (i.e. it is no longer recognizable), and is not from the five special types of grain, the *brocha* becomes *Shehakol*. Therefore, the *brocha* on corn chips (made from corn flour) and cake made from potato

starch is *Shehakol*.¹⁸ The *brocha achrona* on all non-*chameishes minei dagan* products is *Borei Nefashos*.

Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt”l*, explains¹⁹ if the grain has not been ground down to flour, but only popped (e.g., popcorn, or the grit is rolled into corn flakes), it retains its *Hoadama* status. Kellogg's Corn Flakes and Frosted Flakes are made from recognizable corn pieces that are not ground into flour, so the *brocha* is *Hoadama*. Corn Chex is also made from recognizable corn pieces.²⁰ However, General Mills Country Corn Flakes is made from corn flour; therefore, its *brocha* is *Shehakol*.

Some companies and private label manufacturers produce corn flakes from small pieces of corn known as “grits”, others use corn flour extruded into corn pellets. If the cereal lists corn flour, the product has been ground and the *brocha* is *Shehakol* (if wheat and oat flour are not present). If the cereal lists corn or milled corn, it may be a whole grain product and the *brocha* is *Hoadama*, or it may be ground corn and the *brocha* is *Shehakol*.²¹ When one is in doubt and cannot determine which type of corn

¹ Oats and wheat are the most commonly used *chameishes minei dagan* grains in cereals.

² For a full discussion and understanding of *pas haba'ah b'kisnin*, see *Kashrus Kurrents* Spring 2005.

³ Although this product has an intermediate doughy stage, it never obtains the full characteristics of bread. Therefore, it is *pas haba'ah b'kisnin* and the *brocha* is *mezonos*.

⁴ *Shulchan Aruch* OC 208:4. The *Shulchan Aruch* says such products should ideally be eaten during a bread meal, since there is a *safek* (doubt) as to which *brocha achrona* is recited. *Lmaaseh*, if one eats the grain, the *brocha achrona* is *Borei Nefashos*.

⁵ See *Shulchan Aruch and Mishnah Brura* OC 208:2 and 208:4 for a full explanation of this issue.

⁶ This is a cereal manufactured by Kashi Co. and should not be confused with “kasha” (buckwheat). The *brocha* on kasha is *Hoadama* because it is not from the *chameishes minei dagan*.

⁷ See Footnote 23.

⁸ Ideally, they should only be eaten during a meal (see above Footnote 4).

⁹ *Mishnah Brura* 208:15.

¹⁰ Based on *Sefer Mkor Habracha* 54. Additionally, Rav Heinemann explains the following *svara*: This product is now a “*ma'aseh kedaira*” because it has been processed into a form that is normally eaten. According to this *svara*, the *brocha rishona* is *Mezonos* and the *brocha achrona* is *Al Hamichya*.

¹¹ *Sefer V'zos Habrocha* Chap. 12 as further explained in his *Birur Halacha Siman* 27:4 in the name of Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, *zt”l*. Since these grains are simply popped and do not stick together, the *brocha* is *Hoadama*. The *brocha achrona* is a *safek* and, therefore, the product should *l'chatchila* be eaten during a bread meal. If it is not eaten during a bread meal, the *brocha achrona* is *Borei Nefashos*.

¹² *Igros Moshe* OC 4:45.

¹³ There is a *svara* to say that the *brocha achrona* is *Al Hamichya* (see Footnote 10).

¹⁴ It should be noted that some brands of granola cereals have similar *halachic* issues. Like puffed wheat, they are *chameishes minei dagan* products that are “partially processed” (i.e. heated but not broken down into flour). The same issues as to whether they have been processed enough to become *Mezonos* apply. One would have to determine the exact process of each brand to determine which *brocha rishona* and *achrona* are recited. Kellogg's Lowfat Granola cereal (with and without raisins) has a similar *halachic* status as puffed wheat. Therefore, a *Hoadama* or *Mezonos* may be recited and the *brocha achrona* is *Borei Nefashos*. However, General Mills Nature Valley Granola Bars and Quaker Granola Bars are processed enough to make their *brocha rishona* a *Mezonos* and *brocha achrona* *Al Hamichya*.

¹⁵ See *Igros Moshe* OC 4:46.

¹⁶ *Igros Moshe* EH 1:114. The “*klipos*” of the *chameishes minei dagan* refer to bran.

¹⁷ This product also contains a type of bran which contains endosperm. Nonetheless, the endosperm is *tafel* to the bran. However, Raisin Bran cereal consists of higher amounts of endosperm mixed with the bran product; hence, the *brocha* is *Mezonos*. This will be addressed in the *Ikkur V'Tofel* section.

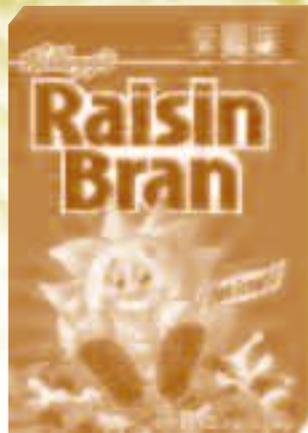
¹⁸ The same is true of Pringles Potato Crisps, since they are produced from ground up potatoes that are no longer recognizable.

¹⁹ *Choveres Torah V'horaah* 5733.

²⁰ Although the label states “corn meal” on Corn Chex, nonetheless, the *brocha* is *Hoadama* because it is produced from small pieces (still recognizable as corn) and not flour, in a way similar to the case discussed in *Mishnah Brura* 208:38 and *Sha'ar Hatzion* 208:42.



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ingredient is used, a *Shehakol* should be recited.

Kellogg's Corn Pops is manufactured differently in various facilities worldwide. In the United States, the corn is not ground into flour and corn pieces are used; therefore, the *brocha* is *Hoadama*. In Canada, the corn is first ground into flour, and the *brocha* is *Shehakol*.

Rice is unique, as its *brocha* is *Mezonos* and its *brocha achrona* is *Borei Nefashos*.²² This includes processed rice products, such as Kellogg's Rice Krispies and Post Fruity Pebbles. It also includes products manufactured from rice flour.

III. *Ikkur V'Tofel*—Mixtures of Primary and Secondary Ingredients

In general, when there is a mixture of foods with different *brochos*, one determines the main purpose for eating this food and recites the *brocha* of that ingredient. This ingredient is known as the *ikkur*. For example, if one eats a fruit salad with 60% apples and 40% watermelon mixed together, only a *Ho'etz* is recited. The watermelon is *tafel* (secondary) to the *Ho'etz* (the *ikkur*) and, therefore, *Hoadama* is not recited.

Similarly, if the main ingredient of a cereal is oat or wheat flour the *brocha* is *Mezonos*, and the other ingredients are *tafel*. *Chameishes minei dagan* have a special status: Even if a non-*chameishes minei dagan* ingredient (e.g., corn flour) is the first ingredient and *chameishes minei dagan* (e.g., oat flour) is a "secondary" ingredient, under certain conditions, the *chameishes minei dagan* is still considered the *ikkur* and the *brocha* is *Mezonos*. This is true even though the *chameishes minei dagan* is not the ingredient with the highest percentage. The guidelines are as follows: If the *chameishes minei dagan Mezonos* ingredient is added *l'taam*, as an integral part of the cereal or for its own flavor, even though it is second or third in ingredient amount, the *brocha* is *Mezonos*.²³ An example of this is Kellogg's Apple Jacks.

Similarly, the *brocha* on Raisin Bran cereal is *Mezonos*, as the endosperm in the flakes is the *ikkur* ingredient. However, if the *chameishes minei dagan* is only *l'davek* — a binding agent for texture or consistency or a flavoring component to enhance the primary corn ingredient only, the *brocha* is *Shehakol*. An example of this is Quaker Cap'n Crunch cereal.

This *halacha* is very relevant to cereals, as several list corn flour as a first ingredient and *chameishes minei dagan*, such as oat flour, wheat flour, or wheat gluten (the protein portion in wheat) as a second or third ingredient. Unfortunately, there is no way to tell if it is added *l'taam* or *l'davek* from the label.²⁴ When there is doubt as to whether the oat flour listed as a secondary ingredient is *l'taam* or *l'davek*, and there is no way of determining this, one should recite a *Shehakol* and *Borei Nefashos*.²⁵

Kellogg's Crispix is half rice and half corn. Since it has no *ikkur* or *tafel* and no *chameishes minei dagan* component, two *brochos* are required. A *Mezonos* is recited and one eats from the darker rice side, then a *Hoadama* is recited on the lighter corn side and the cereal is eaten. The *brocha achrona* is *Borei Nefashos*.

Under normal circumstances, when eating cereal with milk, the cereal is the *ikkur* and the milk is the *tafel*; therefore, only one *brocha* is recited. This is true even if one finishes the cereal and there is a little leftover milk eaten alone, no *brocha* is recited on the milk.²⁶ The same *halacha* applies when one eats cereal with raisins, bananas or strawberries. Under normal circumstances, a *brocha* is recited only on the cereal, not the fruit, since they are *tafel*.²⁷

IV. *Brocha Achrona*

If a *Shehakol* or *Hoadama* is recited on a cereal, the *brocha achrona* is *Borei Nefashos*. If a *Mezonos* is recited, the *brocha achrona* is

Al Hamichya (except for rice cereals, where the *brocha achrona* is *Borei Nefashos*). To recite any *brocha achrona*, one must eat a *k'zayis* (1.27 fl. oz, 38 ml, the approximate volume of a golf ball) of cereal in the amount of time known as *k'dei achilas pras* — ideally within two minutes.²⁸

One may calculate the entire amount of cereal eaten in deciding the *brocha achrona*. If one eats a *k'zayis* of a *chameishes minei dagan Mezonos* cereal, the *brocha achrona* is *Al Hamichya*²⁹ even though the actual wheat or oat content consumed may be less than a *k'zayis*.³⁰ This is true only if the various ingredients are mixed and baked into a single entity.³¹ However, if a *chameishes minei dagan* cereal contains pieces upon which a *Mezonos* is recited and pieces upon which a different *brocha* is recited (when eaten without the *chameishes minei dagan*), one must eat a *k'zayis* of the *Mezonos* pieces to recite an *Al Hamichya*.³²

V. Research

It is obvious that for many cereals it is impossible to know the correct *brocha* without first determining more information than is available on the box. In developing the Star-K *Brochos* List, we had to obtain answers to numerous detailed questions regarding the formulation and process of the ingredients and products. Follow up questions and on-site reviews were sometimes necessary. In a few cases, we discovered formula revisions or additional information that caused changes in the *brocha* of particular cereals.³³ Undoubtedly, as companies continue to re-formulate cereals for better taste and more nutrition, one should not be surprised to find out that the *brocha* on one's favorite cereal has changed.

In the *z'chus* of beginning the day with reciting the correct *brochos*, may *Klal Yisroel* be *zoche* to an abundance of much *brocha v'hatzlacha*.

²¹ This is true if it does not contain additional wheat or oat ingredients — this will be addressed in the next section.

²² *Shulchan Aruch OC 208:7*.

²³ *Sefer Pischei Halacha Hilchos Brochos* Chap. 7 Footnote 32 states that according to the *Mishnah Brura 208:7*, *chameishes minei dagan* which is *Hoadama* (e.g., that was puffed without removing the bran) is also considered an *ikkur* even if it is not the first ingredient listed (as long as it is added *l'taam*). This is relevant to *Kashi Go Lean* and *Good Friends* cereals, upon which a *Hoadama* is recited. For a discussion of this topic, see the entire footnote in *Sefer Pischei Halacha*.

²⁴ If wheat starch is added, it is definitely *l'davek* and the *brocha* is *Shehakol*.

²⁵ For a full discussion of this topic, including other cases of eating cereal with milk, see *Igros Moshe OC 1:43* and *Sefer Pischei Halacha Hilchos Brochos 7:38*.

²⁶ See *Sefer Pischei Halacha* Chapter 7, Se'if 38 and Footnote 62 for a full discussion of different cases involving fruit added to a cereal.

²⁷ Licorice contains wheat flour added *l'davek* and, therefore, is *Shehakol* (unless the flour is listed as the first ingredient).

²⁸ *B'dieved*, if one eats a *k'zayis* within four minutes, a *brocha achrona* may be recited. For a full discussion of this topic, see *Kashrus Kurrents* Summer 2005.

²⁹ Regarding the *brocha achrona* on puffed wheat products, see above Section I.

³⁰ The *Mishnah Brura 208:48* says this is the "*minhag ha'olam*." See also *Igros Moshe OC 1:71*.

³¹ For example, if one ate exactly a *k'zayis* of *Cheerios*, the "*minhag ha'olam*" is to recite an *Al Hamichya* because the oat flour, corn starch and sugar are all combined into each of the *Cheerios*. Similarly, one could recite an *Al Hamichya* when eating a *k'zayis* of *Apple Jacks* because the additional ingredients (e.g., sugar and corn flour) are baked into a single entity with the oat and wheat flour (i.e. with the *chameishes minei dagan* ingredients, which are considered the *ikkur*).

³² For example, if one ate exactly a *k'zayis* of *Post Cranberry Almond Crunch*, one recites a *Mezonos* but can not recite an *Al Hamichya* afterwards. Since the *Mezonos* pieces do not add up to a *k'zayis*, and the cranberries and almonds are not *mitztaref* to the wheat flakes, a *Borei Nefashos* is recited (see *Mishnah Brura 210:1*). If one ate exactly a *k'zayis* of *Raisin Bran* (i.e. *chameishes minei dagan* flakes and *shivas haminin* raisins), there is a question amongst the *poskim* whether a *Borei Nefashos* or *may'ain shalosh* is recited. For an explanation of this *halacha*, see *Pischei Teshuvos 210:6*. Of course, if one ate a *k'zayis* of *Mezonos* pieces of *Post Cranberry Almond Crunch* or *Raisin Bran*, an *Al Hamichya* is recited.

³³ Please note the following cereals fall into this category: *Honeycomb*, *French Toast Crunch*, *Crunchy Corn Bran*, *Honey Smacks*, *Golden Crisp*, and *Kellogs Lowfat Granola* cereal. Please see the current *Star-K* list for the correct *brochos* for these cereals.



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Baltimore, MD
Lower Level in Section 123

NATIONAL TENNIS CENTER
Flushing, NY
In the Food Court adjacent to Court 12

ORIOLE PARK AT CAMDEN YARDS
Baltimore, MD
Field Level, Section 83

RFK STADIUM
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Behind Third Base, Section 220

SHEA STADIUM
Flushing, NY
Lodge level (Blue), Section 13 Food Cart

SHEA STADIUM
Flushing, NY
Field Level, Right field food court

SHEA STADIUM
Flushing, NY
Mezzanine level (Green), Section 14 Food Cart



★ STAR-K LIST OF POPULAR CEREALS & THEIR BROCHOS 5767/2006-07

CEREAL NAME	STATUS	BROCHA	BROCHA ACHRONA
GENERAL MILLS when bearing OU			
Basic 4	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Cheerios	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Cheerios - Fruity	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Cheerios - Yogurt Burst	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Cinnamon Toast Crunch, All	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Cocoa Puffs	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Cookie Crisp	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Corn Chex	Pareve	Hoadama	Borai Nefashos
Country Corn Flakes	Dairy	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
French Toast Crunch	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Frosted Chex	Pareve	Mezonos	Borai Nefashos
Golden Grahams	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Honey Nut Chex Cereal	Pareve	Mezonos	Borai Nefashos
Honey Nut Clusters	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Kix (Original, Berry Berry)	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
MultiBran Chex	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Oatmeal Crisp, All	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Raisin Nut Bran	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Reese's Puffs	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Rice Chex	Pareve	Mezonos	Borai Nefashos
Total	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Total Raisin Bran	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Trix	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Wheat Chex	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Wheaties	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
KASHI when bearing OU			
7 Whole Grain Puffs	Pareve	Hoadama	Borai Nefashos
Go Lean	Pareve	Hoadama	Borai Nefashos
Good Friends	Pareve	Hoadama	Borai Nefashos
Heart to Heart Honey Toasted Oat	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Mighty Bites (Cinnamon, Honey Crunch)	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
KELLOGG'S when bearing K			
All Bran - Bran Buds	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
All Bran - Original	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Apple Jacks	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Cocoa Krispies	Pareve	Mezonos	Borai Nefashos
Complete All Bran Oat Bran Flakes	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Complete All Bran Wheat Bran Flakes	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Corn Flakes	Pareve	Hoadama	Borai Nefashos
Corn Pops (U.S.)	Pareve	Hoadama	Borai Nefashos
Cracklin' Oat Bran	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Crispix - All	Pareve	Mezonos and Hoadama*	Borai Nefashos
Froot Loops	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Frosted Flakes	Pareve	Hoadama	Borai Nefashos
Honey Smacks	Pareve	Mezonos or Hoadama**	Borai Nefashos**
Just Right	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Lowfat Granola with/without Raisins	Dairy	Mezonos or Hoadama**	Borai Nefashos**
Mini Swirlz - Cinnamon Bun	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Mueslix	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Product 19	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Raisin Bran	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Raisin Bran Crunch	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Rice Krispies	Pareve	Mezonos	Borai Nefashos
Smart Start	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Special K (Original)	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Toasted Honey Crunch	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Tony's Cinnamon Krunchers	Pareve	Mezonos	Borai Nefashos

CEREAL NAME	STATUS	BROCHA	BROCHA ACHRONA
KEMACH when bearing the Symbol of Rabbi N.N. Horowitz & OK			
Bran Flakes	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Bunch -O- Krunch	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Choco Chippers	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Cocoa Munchees	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Corn Flakes	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Crisp Rice	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Fruit Whirls	Pareve	Mezonos	Borai Nefashos
Honey Nut Toasted Oats	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Raisin Bran	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Sugar Frosted Flakes	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Sugar Puffed Wheat	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Toasted Oats	Pareve	Hoadama	Borai Nefashos
Whole Wheat Flakes	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
MALT-O-MEAL when bearing K			
Apple Zings	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Blueberry Muffin Tops	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Crispy Rice	Pareve	Mezonos	Borai Nefashos
Dyno-Bites (Cocoa, Fruity)	Pareve	Mezonos	Borai Nefashos
Puffed Rice	Pareve	Mezonos	Borai Nefashos
Raisin Bran	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Scooters	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Toasty O's (All)	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Tootie Fruities	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
POST when bearing OK			
Alpha Bits	Dairy Equip.	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Banana Nut Crunch	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Bran Flakes	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Cocoa Pebbles	Pareve	Mezonos	Borai Nefashos
Cranberry Almond Crunch	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Fruit and Bran	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Fruity Pebbles	Pareve	Mezonos	Borai Nefashos
Golden Crisp	Dairy Equipment	Mezonos or Hoadama**	Borai Nefashos**
Grape Nuts	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Honey Bunches of Oats (Almond, Banana, Honey Roasted, Peach)	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Honeycomb	Dairy Equip.	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Raisin Bran	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Shredded Wheat (Original, Spoon Size)	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Toasties Corn Flakes	Pareve	Hoadama	Borai Nefashos
QUAKER when bearing OU			
Cap 'N Crunch	Dairy	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Capn' Crunch Crunch Berries	Dairy	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Capn' Crunch Peanut Butter	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Cinnamon Life	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Crisp Rice	Pareve	Mezonos	Borai Nefashos
Crunchy Corn Bran	Pareve	Shehakol	Borai Nefashos
Life (Original)	Pareve	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Oatmeal Squares	Dairy	Mezonos	Al Hamichya
Puffed Rice	Pareve	Mezonos	Borai Nefashos

* Recite Mezonos and eat the darker side (rice) first. Then recite Hoadama and then eat the lighter side (corn).

** Based on Igros Moshe OC 4:45 - see article for full explanation

For the *halachos* of *brochos* note: recited on breakfast cereals, it is recommended that one reads the accompanying "for Breakfast" article.

Due to possible future changes in formulations, this list should only be used through 2007. Check with Star-K for future updates.

Star-K's Third Annual KASHRUS TRAINING PROGRAM

by Margie Pensak



Rabbi Chaim Moshe Levy, a *Mesivta rebbe* in Lakewood, New Jersey, knew it was coming, yet he still felt unprepared. In July, he received an overseas telephone call informing him that the time had come to take over the pulpit of his deceased father, Rabbi Daniel Levy, *zt"l*, as the Rav of I.R.G. (*Khal Adas Yeshurun*) in Zurich, Switzerland.

Rabbi Levy hoped to prepare himself for his new post by taking advantage of Star-K Certification's unique educational program later that month. "I wanted to get some basic information about what is going on in the world of *kashrus*," explained Rabbi Levy. "I also wanted to meet the various experts at Star-K, personally."

Rabbi Levy was pleased with his decision to attend the Star-K seminar in Baltimore, Maryland. "The seminar was extremely informative, and the information was given over in a very organized manner," said Rabbi Levy. "It was wonderful and covered all aspects of

the kosher world, from production on. It is an intense program, but you can pick up a lot of knowledge as well as tip-offs such as how to manage *mashgichim*, companies that are not in compliance, and other practical tips." Rabbi Levy was just one of 26 participants, which included *rabbonim*, *kollel* fellows, and others serving in *klei kodesh* who have studied *Yorah Deah*. The intensive seminar featured lectures by Star-K's rabbinic staff members, including Rabbinic Administrator Rabbi Moshe Heinemann and President Dr. Avrom Pollak. Rabbi Heinemann spoke of the intricacies of *bishul akum* in his *shiur*, "*Bishul Akum and Ne'emanus of an Akum*". Dr. Pollak discussed practical guidelines for setting up a local *vaad hakashrus* in his lecture, "A Certifying Agency's Administrative Issues", and gave advice for the decisions one faces. Sessions covered various segments of the *kashrus* industry, including consumer inquiries and Sabbath mode appliances. They

incorporated a Star-K produced audio-visual presentation of one of its *Cholov Yisroel* production facilities, as well as a hands-on practicum for vegetable checking. Field trips to a slaughterhouse, confectionery, restaurant, bakery, and the kosher kitchen of the Hyatt Regency rounded out the seminar experience.

Rabbi Zvi Goldberg, coordinator of the seminar and Star-K *Kashrus* Administrator, attributes the success of this program to a mutual *zerizus*. "The eagerness of the attendees to learn about *kashrus* was matched by the willingness of the Rabbis to give of their time and expertise. This is why the program is so successful."

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A limited number of **LIGHTBOXES** for checking vegetables for insect infestation are available from the STAR-K. For details please call **410-484-4110**.



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