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Hafrashas Challah

Parshas Chukas 5784

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The two previous issues were about hafrashas challah – Parts 2 and 3 (333, 334). We referred there to what we wrote in an earlier issue (67), Hafrashas Challah Part 1. – the first on this subject. Since we have received hundreds of requests to receive that issue, we decided to reprint it for the public as an introduction and supplement to the series on hafrashas challah. [Some points were repeated in the other issues.]

The Mitzva of Hafrashas Challah for Women

1. The mitzva of hafrashas challah was mainly given to women. Therefore, women and girls who bake should review these halachos in order to prevent any potential pitfalls, ה"ו.
2. If the woman of the house is unavailable, her husband or any bar/bas mitzva member of the family can do hafrashas challah.
3. **In honor of Shabbos.** It is customary for women to knead enough dough before Shabbos or Yom Tov to require hafrashas challah (רמ"א או"ח רמ"ב). Two reasons are given: 1) To honor the Shabbos/Yom Tov; 2) It is a reminder of Chava's sin in causing Adam – who was considered "the challah portion of the world" – to be lost (מ"ב שם סק"ו).
4. According to the first reason, one can also bake on Thursday, and one can bake less than the minimum amount requiring hafrashas challah. According to the second reason, one should specifically bake on Erev Shabbos [when Adam sinned] a quantity requiring hafrashas challah.

Types of Grain Requiring Hafrashas Challah

5. Only dough made from the five grains [wheat, barley, spelt, oats, and rye] – regardless of whether it will be used for bread, challah, cake, etc. – requires hafrashas challah (ש"ע סי' שכ"ד ס"א).
6. Dough made from the minimum shiur of flour that is a mix of the five grains, e.g., a mixture of wheat and spelt, also requires hafrashas challah (ש"ע שם ס"ב).
7. If a woman made two batches of dough, each from a different type of flour and neither containing the minimum shiur, and she does not want the two to be mixed, sticking them together does not combine them for the shiur (ש"ע סי' שכ"ו ס"א). If she does not mind the two getting mixed, see Shulchan Aruch (סי' שכ"ד ס"ב) for the specifics of which flours can combine with each other.

Minimum Shiur for Hafrashas Challah

8. The dough must contain 43.2 beitzah of flour [the gematria of ח"ל"ה] to require hafrashas challah (ש"ע סי' שכ"ד ס"א). The foremost poskim differ as to the modern-day measurements. As a result, there is an amount from which challah is separated as a chumra without a bracha and an amount from which challah is separated with a bracha.
9. The poskim differ about this too. There are primarily two shiurim of wheat flour [see table in Issue 333 for other types of flour]. The opinion of Rav Chaim Na'eh, which is the minhag Yerushalayim, is to separate challah without a bracha from dough containing 1.25 kg of flour, and with a bracha from 1.67 kg (מו"ד הגר"י בלויא בלקט העומר פ"ה ס"ב).
10. According to the Chazon Ish, the dough must contain 1.2 kg of flour to require hafrashas challah without a bracha, and 2.25 kg with a bracha.
11. Thus, to satisfy all opinions, many people do hafrashas without a bracha from 1.2 kg [approx. 10 US cups] of flour or more. They only do hafrashas with a bracha from more than 2.25 kg [approx. 19 US cups], in accordance with the rule of ספק ברכות להקל.
12. There is no need at all to separate challah from less than 1.2 kg of wheat flour, and if one did, it is not considered challah (שם ס"ג).

13. Occasionally, a dough will have less than the minimum amount of flour, but while kneading, a woman adds some flour here and there. She should take care not to add enough flour to require hafrashas challah. If she is uncertain, she should separate challah without a bracha.

Whole Wheat Flour

14. In some factories today, the bran is removed from the whole wheat flour and then recombined. In such a case, the bran is not factored in for the shiur of flour (ש"ע סי' שכ"ד ס"ג). Thus, one must add 15% to the ordinary amount to be able to make the bracha. Accordingly, one may make a bracha for 1.92 kg according to Rav Chaim Na'eh and 2.59 kg [approx. 21.5 US cups] according to the Chazon Ish (מדריך הכשרות עדה"ח תשע"ז עמ' 109).
15. 'Rubinfeld' brand whole wheat flour (Eidah Chareidis) does not need the extra 15% (this is the case as of now).

Doughs Which Do Not Join for the Shiur

16. **Regular and whole wheat.** If a woman kneads two doughs from wheat flour, each less than the minimum amount, and she does not want them to get mixed together [e.g., one is regular wheat and the other is whole wheat, or one is regular wheat and the other is sourdough], they do not join to meet the minimum shiur (ש"ע סי' שכ"ד ס"א). Accordingly, if each one is less than 1.2 kg, hafrashas is not done; if each is less than 2.25 kg, hafrashas is done for each dough separately without a bracha.
17. **Kokosh cake, challo.** The same is true if one is making kokosh cakes along with challo. If the doughs are somewhat different and care is taken not to mix all the dough together, even if their recipes are similar (ש"ע אבני צדק מהדורת תשנ"ג בהוספות סי' ו') they do not join to meet the minimum shiur (לקט העומר פ"ז ס"ט ובהערה).
18. **Chocolate and cinnamon bakka.** If the two doughs are identical, just she is planning to fill one with chocolate and the other with cinnamon, they join to meet the minimum shiur (ש"ע ובשרית שבט) (הקהתי ח"ד סי' ע"ה).

Doughs Which Join

19. **"נשיכה"** If there are two identical doughs – both without the minimum shiur or one with the shiur and one without – and one does not care if they get mixed together, they can be connected through נשיכה. This is when the two doughs touch to the point that they stick together a bit, such that if they were to be separated, each dough would remove some of the other dough. If this is done, one can do hafrashas from one of them (ש"ע סי' שכ"ה ס"א, ובט"ז שם) (סק"א). However, merely touching them together does not combine them for the shiur to require hafrashas challah.
20. Most poskim hold נשיכה only works on dough, in which case hafrashas challah is done with a bracha. If נשיכה happened during the baking process, some hold it still works. Therefore, the hafrashas should be done without a bracha (להלכה ס"ח אות ה'). If נשיכה was done post-baking, most poskim hold hafrashas is not done.
21. **One basket.** Two doughs can also be combined if they are placed into the same basket, or any other vessel with an interior (ש"ע שכ"ה) (ס"א), provided they do not completely protrude out of the vessel (ש"ע בנק"כ). However, if they were placed on one tray, shelf, table, etc., they do not join.

22. This method works while they are dough, or after they are baked (ארוז ח"א סי רכ"ז, מנ"ח) – even long after they are baked (פתחו כלל ו' ס"א) – and the bracha is made (ל"ז) – (מצוה שפ"ה).
 23. **With a cloth.** Covering the loaves with a cloth is like putting them in one vessel. The same cloth should be beneath the loaves and also covering them on top (שיך סק"ה, פמ"ג סי תנ"ז מ"ז סק"א). Some hold they need not be covered by the same cloth, and they can even be covered with a dish (ביאה"ל סי תנ"ז ס"א ד"ה והסל).

Dough Which Will Be Divided

24. **Several small doughs.** If a woman made the minimum amount of dough, even if she plans on splitting it up, e.g., she is making several smaller challoos, she still does hafrasha with a bracha according to most poskim (ש"ת שבת הלוי).
 25. **For multiple people.** However, if she divides the dough planning on sending challoos to others, and she wants specific challoos to go to specific people or she wants to send the doughs to different households where they will be baked, hafrasha is not done, as no one person is receiving the minimum amount of dough (ש"ע סי שכ"ז ס"ב).
 26. **Gan activity.** Often, a morah bakes challoos with her students, with each child assigned a specific piece of dough. Even if the morah bakes all the dough in her house, hafrasha is not done unless she leaves a portion large enough to independently require challah for herself.
 27. **Distributing after baking.** If she is planning on distributing baked bread or cake rather than dough, the chiyuv hafrashas challah remains in force (ש"ע סי שכ"ז ושיך סק"ה).
 28. **Sending challoos to neighbors.** If a woman bakes several challoos and subsequently sends them to various neighbors or to her adult children, she must do hafrasha since she distributed challoos rather than dough. Some say not to make a bracha (ש"ת ארץ צבי) unless she keeps a minimum shiur (סי מ"ט, ש"ת מנח"י ח"י סי ק"ב [even by Rav Chaim Na'eh's measurement] for herself; others say she may make a bracha (בעל שבת הקהתי).
 29. **Saving for next week.** If she makes the minimum shiur of dough but is only baking some now and is freezing the rest to be made later, the poskim debate what to do (לחם חמודות הל' חלה אות כ'). Some say she should separate challah without a bracha (מ"ד בלקט) others hold she may make a bracha (קובץ מבית לוי עמ' ל"ו עפ"י שבת הלוי הג"ל).

How Big of a Piece to Separate

30. Nowadays, we don't specifically take off 1/48; any amount suffices. However, the minhag is to take off a kezayis (רמ"א סי' – (שערי תורת הבית סי' פ"א אות י"ב) – half a beitzah – even from a large quantity of dough.

When to Do Hafrasha

31. Hafrasha should not be done from flour. If one did, it is not called challah (ש"ע סי שכ"ז ס"א).
 32. L'chatchila, hafrasha should be done in the dough stage (שיך), immediately after kneading, so as not to forget. If one did not do hafrasha before baking the dough, one may do it afterward (ש"ע שכ"ז ס"ה).

Sponge Cake, "Lekach"

33. Marble cake, sponge cake, or the like, which is a liquid batter before baking, can only have hafrasha done after baking, assuming it has the minimum shiur of flour (תורת הארץ). Often, the cake is mostly oil, eggs, sugar, and other ingredients, and the flour is the minority, in which case it is potur from challah (ש"ת מנח"י ח"ה סי ק"ט).

Eating Before Hafrasha Is Done

34. **Outside Eretz Yisroel.** Since dough kneaded outside Eretz Yisroel – even with flour from Eretz Yisroel – only has a chiyuv d'rabonon, one may eat the bread prior to hafrashas challah, provided that a piece of dough is left over. Part of the leftover piece is then removed as the challah portion (ש"ע שכ"ג וברמ"א).
 35. **In Eretz Yisroel.** Dough kneaded in Eretz Yisroel – even with flour from outside Eretz Yisroel – had a chiyuv d'oraisa when the Beis HaMikdash stood. Therefore, one may not eat from the bread before hafrashas challah, as it is like tevel. Also, all the dough must be in one place during the hafrasha (ש"ע שם).

The Hafrasha Process and Bracha

36. **Separating the piece.** Some pull off a piece, make the bracha holding the piece, and then state, "הרי זו חלה".
 37. Others first make the bracha and then pull off a piece. In that case, it is clear that the piece is challah, and it is unnecessary to say "הרי זו חלה". Still, some say it even in this manner.
 38. One should have in mind that only the dough which readily comes off her hand will be challah, not any dough that sticks to her hand. This avoids possibly getting the challah portion mixed with the rest of the dough.

39. When doing hafrasha from dough containing between 1.2 and 2.25 kg of flour (above, 9-10), one should have in mind to cover flour added while shaping the dough, as a bit of extra flour can cause a full chiyuv.
 40. **Nusach of the bracha.** Sefardim say "...וצונן להפריש תרומה" (ש"ע) (ש"כ"ז ס"א), while Ashkenazim say "...להפריש חלה". The main Ashkenazi minhag is to say "להפריש חלה מן העיסה". If hafrasha is done after baking, one should just say "להפריש חלה" (לקט העומר פ"י הערה י"ט).
 41. Even if one merely had in mind to designate a piece as challah without saying "הרי זו חלה" or making the bracha, the piece becomes challah (תורת הארץ אות ל"ג).
 42. It is a good idea to place the challah portion in a plastic bag immediately after separating it. This makes it clear that the piece is challah and prevents it from getting mixed up with the rest of the dough, an otherwise common occurrence, which leads to shailos (below, 54).

Burning the Challah Portion

43. L'chatchila, the challah portion should be burned in a fire by itself (רמ"א שכ"ב ס"ה), as one may not benefit from it.
 44. The poskim write that one should burn the challah in an oven before baking the bread (ש"ע סק"ה). In those days, there was fire in the oven, so after the challah was burned, libun [application of extreme heat] was automatically performed, and the oven could be used. Nowadays, our ovens do not have fire inside, so if one were to burn the challah in an oven, the oven would need to be kashered.
 45. **In an oven.** Some women wrap the challah in aluminum foil before placing it in the oven. This practice is best avoided since it can cause many pitfalls when the dough rises and pushes through the foil, as it often does, rendering the oven not kosher. If this happened, one should ask a rav how to kasher the oven.
 46. **Gas flame.** Some burn the challah over a gas flame. This is also problematic, since the challah touches the grate, necessitating libun.
 47. If burning it is not feasible, one can seal it in a plastic bag in a respectful manner and place it in the garbage (ש"ת מנחת יצחק ח"ד) (סי"ג). This is the proper practice today, that we do not burn it in its own separate fire.
 48. Some freeze the challah portion in a plastic bag and burn several weeks' worth together. One should make sure to mark the bag as hafrashas challah (ש"ת שבת הקהתי ח"ד סי רע"ז), so that it is not mistaken for gefilte fish or kneidlach [both real-life examples].

Forgot to Separate Challah

49. If one forgot to separate challah from the dough, she may do so after it is baked.
 50. If she only remembered after some of the dough was baked, she should l'chatchila bake the rest before doing hafrasha (הג מיימוני סוף) (וזרעים, חלת לחם בשם המרדכי from the dough, it is fine (לקט העומר פ"ו סי"א)).
 51. If one began eating before remembering that challah was not separated, outside Eretz Yisroel, he may continue eating and leave a piece over from which to separate challah. In Eretz Yisroel, he should immediately separate a piece from what is left.
 52. Hafrasha is not done on Shabbos and Yom Tov (ש"ע א"ח שלי"ט ס"ד) unless the dough was made on Yom Tov (ש"ע א"ח תקכ"ד ס"א).
 53. If one remembered on Shabbos or Yom Tov that hafrasha was not done, outside Eretz Yisroel, he should leave over some bread and separate challah from that after Shabbos or Yom Tov. In Eretz Yisroel, if there is no other choice, he may transfer ownership of the bread to a 12-year-old boy or 11-year-old girl who will separate challah with a bracha and also eat from it (לקט העומר פ"א ס"ט בשם) (מהרי"ל דיסקין ובספר תנוך לנער פ"ז).

Challah Portion Got Mixed Up

54. **Hataras nedarim.** If the challah got mixed up with the dough from which it was separated and the volume of the dough is not 101 times that of the challah, one can do hataras nedarim in front of three men. The dough then reverts to tevel and another piece of challah should be separated (רמ"א שכ"ג ס"א) with a bracha (ש"ת חת"ס י"ד סי ט"ז).
 55. L'chatchila, the hataras should be done the same way it is for a neder. Therefore, one should state, "I regret having made this piece challah. Had I known I was going to regret it, I would not have done it" (חכמת) (אדם דיני חלה). The three then declare, "מותר לך" three times.
 56. Since generally the wife does the hafrasha, while the dough belongs to the husband, the husband should do hataras nedarim on behalf of himself and his wife.
 57. If some of the dough was already eaten, in Eretz Yisroel, hataras nedarim can no longer be done, because that would retroactively make what was eaten tevel (ש"ע סק"ו). Outside Eretz Yisroel, where it is permissible to eat and then set aside challah, one can do hataras nedarim as long as there is some dough or bread left.

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