

Kashrus Kurrents

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The Visitor's Halachic Guide to Hospitals

RABBI ZVI GOLDBERG
KASHRUS ADMINISTRATOR

A person visiting a hospital patient is performing the great *mitzvah* of *bikur cholim*. It is one of the *mitzvos* for which a person reaps benefits in this world, while the principal reward is saved for the next world. While visiting the sick, some *halachic* issues may arise. This article addresses these issues from the visitor's point of view. Questions affecting the patient (such as adjusting the bed, using the call button, and asking the staff to perform tasks on *Shabbos*) are important issues that should be posed to one's rabbi.

SHABBOS

Although visiting a patient in the hospital on *Shabbos* may present a number of challenges, this does not mean one should necessarily refrain from visiting the sick. To the contrary, the patient may benefit greatly from a *Shabbos* visit since fewer people tend to stop by on this day and he may welcome the company, or need an advocate.² One who has the opportunity to look around the hospital before *Shabbos* should do so, in order to identify any potential *Shabbos* concerns. (Unless otherwise noted, all references in this article to *Shabbos* include *Yom Tov*, as well.)

Doors – Hospitals generally have one of three types of entrance doors: manual, electric eye, or revolving.

Ideally, one should use a manual door when entering or leaving a hospital on *Shabbos*. If there are none available, he should wait until a non-Jew triggers the electric-eye door with his movement, and then immediately walk through the doorway.³ He should not linger near the door.

A manually operated revolving door does not present difficulty on *Shabbos*, nor does an electrically powered door that revolves continuously, since walking through such a door does not affect its operation. However, an electric eye which continuously checks for the presence of people is a problem on *Shabbos*. When someone approaches this kind of door, he may cause it to activate.⁴ Therefore, one should wait until a non-Jew activates the door and then immediately walk through the doorway.

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¹ This article was written *l'iluy nishmas* the author's father, Asher ben Zvi A"H. The idea for this article was formulated while the author visited his father in the hospital.

² *Mishna Berura* 287:1 (see B.H.) discusses when *Shabbos* visits are appropriate. See also *Responsa Tzitz Eliezer* 13:36.

³ If one is uncertain if the person opening the door is Jewish, we follow the majority. Therefore, in the U.S. we may assume he is not Jewish.

⁴ This kind of door is not immediately obvious, but with some attention it can be seen that the revolving door stops after a while when no one walks through.

Machine Matzohs: Timing Is Everything!

RABBI TZVI ROSEN
EDITOR, KASHRUS KURRENTS

Meticulous, scrupulous and passionate are terms that describe the fervor, zeal and seriousness displayed by the kosher consumer regarding *Pesach kashrus* in general, and *Pesach matzohs* in particular. The kosher consumer has become more sophisticated and savvy with each passing year. Kosher consumers are willing to pay top dollar for a quality kosher product. *Pesach matzohs* are no exception. Machine *matzohs* with fine *mehadrin hechsherim* are readily available on the supermarket shelf. Are all machine *matzohs* created equal?

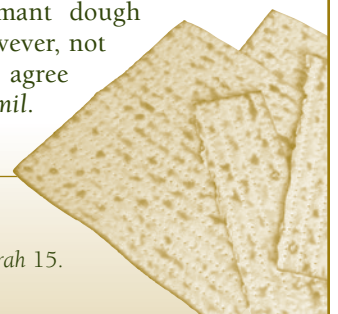
Regarding *matzoh* baking and the time parameters for *chimutz*, leavening, the *Shulchan Aruch*¹ states, "One should not leave the dough dormant, not for a moment." If the dough is constantly being worked the *chimutz* process is impeded. However, the *Shulchan Aruch* continues, "If the dough is left dormant for a 'mil', the dough will rise and will become *chometz*."

How long is a 'mil'?² The *Bais Yosef* posits that a *mil* is 18 minutes. 18 minutes has been the accepted *chimutz* standard for time immemorial. After 18 minutes, the dormant dough becomes *chometz*. However, not all *halachic* opinions agree with the 18 minute *mil*.

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¹ *Orach Chaim* 459:2.

² O.C. 459:2; *Mishnah Brurah* 15.



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RABBI ZVI GOLDBERG
KASHRUS ADMINISTRATOR

Interior doors may also be motorized. They are activated by pressing a button on the wall, or by pulling slightly on the door; they may also be controlled by an electric eye. One hospital door that was evaluated was triggered by a person standing as far as 15 feet from the door. One should be on the alert for these types of doors and walk through them only when they are already opened, as stated above.

Robots – Hospital robots (which may look like mechanized carts) are used to deliver medicine and supplies throughout the building. They navigate to their destination and can activate doors and elevators, using sensors to avoid a collision. One should avoid walking near the robots, since this will cause them to change direction, stop, or ask that one move to a different area.

Elevators - Hospitals often have many floors. Is it permissible to use an elevator on *Shabbos*?

Use of an elevator involves a number of issues, including:⁵

1. Elevator doors are equipped with a mechanism which prevents them from closing when people are in the elevator entranceway. One who triggers this mechanism is transgressing a *Shabbos* prohibition.
2. To reach a specific floor, one generally presses a button which starts the elevator and may cause the button to illuminate.

Therefore, if at all possible one should avoid using an elevator on *Shabbos*. If it is very difficult for a visitor to use the stairs, he should enter the elevator immediately after a non-Jew to avoid activating the door through the electric eye. (This is not easily accomplished; due to limited space the electric eye may unfortunately be triggered.) He should not ask anyone to press a button for him, rather he should exit on the nearest level and walk to the desired floor.

In case of need, one may use a “*Shabbos* elevator” which stops on each floor and remains open for a short while. One should enter or exit the elevator as soon as the door opens. He should not block the elevator doorway as this will activate the electric eye.

Stairwell - The door to the stairwell may be hooked up to either an alarm or electromagnetic lock mechanism. Some hospitals and nursing homes prefer locks that incorporate

electronics which alert the security personnel so they can determine whether or not to let a person leave a particular ward or floor. Pressing the bar or turning the handle on this kind of door may activate a mechanism which will sound an alarm or use electricity to unlock the door. If one needs to use such a door on *Shabbos*, he is permitted to ask non-Jewish personnel to open the door for him.

There may also be a security camera in the stairwell. It is best to avoid being videoed by such cameras on *Shabbos*, since the image is projected on a screen. In a hospital, however, it is difficult to avoid this and one is permitted to walk past the cameras.⁶

Beds - Some hospital beds, particularly in the intensive care unit, are responsive to movement and adjust automatically. A visitor should be aware that sitting down or resting his hand on this type of bed will cause it to move.

Washrooms - Hospitals may be equipped with toilets that are controlled by an electric eye. In a situation where there is no alternative, one may use the toilet on *Shabbos* due to the *kavod habrios* (human dignity) involved.⁷ However, one may not use the sink if it is similarly controlled.⁸

Food On *Shabbos* – It is permitted to have non-Jews heat up food on *Shabbos* for patients who are ill.⁹ However, this leniency does not apply to visitors. If a hot meal is brought for a visitor, he may not eat it until the food has cooled down to room temperature.¹⁰ Even if a hot meal was brought for the patient, a visitor may not partake of it until it cools down.¹¹

Regarding *Kiddush*, if a *kiddush* cup is unavailable any cup is acceptable;¹² however, a non-disposable cup is preferred . If

⁵ *Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasa* (S.S.K.) (23:49) writes that going down in an elevator is more problematic than going up. However, there are various types of elevators, in addition to changing technology, and this point is not applicable everywhere. See also *Shevet Halevi* 6:39.

⁶ When he has no interest in being seen by the cameras. *Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv*, in a personal conversation with *Rav Moshe Heinemann* (also cited in *Orchos Shabbos* 15, note 55); *Rav Shmuel Vozner* (*Responsa* quoted in *Orchos Shabbos* pg. 513). See *Shulchan Shlomo siman* 340, note 12b citing *Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach*.

⁷ Before he rises, he should cover the electric eye so that the mechanism will not be activated. It can be covered with a piece of paper, even though the paper may fall off at a later time. (See also *Nishmas Shabbos* 6:74{2nd}).

⁸ There are alternatives available to using the sink, for example using water from a pitcher or a conventional sink.

⁹ *Shulchan Aruch* O.C. 328:17 and M.B. 47. On *Yom Tov*, food may be heated even for a visitor.

¹⁰ This assumes the meal was only heated, but not actually cooked on *Shabbos*.

¹¹ *Shulchan Aruch* 318:2.

¹² S.S.K. 57:11. See *Igros Moshe* 3:39.



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there is no wine or grape juice available for Friday night, one may wash and then recite *Kiddush* over *challah* (or even a slice of bread), substituting the *brocha* of *Hamotzie* for *Boreh Pri Hagafen*. If bread is unavailable and the visitor cannot wait to eat upon returning home at a late hour, he may *daven* and eat without making *Kiddush*.¹³

There is a *mitzvah* to use two whole *challahs* for *lechem mishneh*. Bagels or buns may be used instead of *challahs*. If they are sliced, they are acceptable with the following conditions: 1. The two halves are still attached, even if only slightly; and 2. When picking up the smaller piece, the larger piece remains attached and does not break off.

Shabbos Candles – *Hadlakas Neiros Shabbos* is an obligation that applies even to someone who is hospital bound. A patient whose spouse is lighting candles at home should nonetheless light with a *brocho* in the hospital room.¹⁴ A rabbi should be consulted regarding the *halacha* as to whether or not both the patient and an overnight visitor are obligated to light *Shabbos* candles. Since hospital regulations forbid the actual lighting of candles in the room, one should light an electric incandescent lamp or flashlight in the hospital room and recite a *brocho*.¹⁵

Eruv Chatzeiros - An *eruv chatzeiros*¹⁶ is not needed in order to carry within a hospital.

Security - In some hospitals, especially in the emergency room, visitors may be asked to pass through a metal detector upon entering the facility. One may do so only upon removing all metal items so as not to set off the detector.

VARIOUS HOSPITAL ISSUES

Meals - A hospital may serve meals which are pre-packaged, similar to airline meals. If the meal is served in two segments, a hot and a cold portion, always check that the hot and cold portions come sealed and labeled. Furthermore, one should make sure that the portions correspond with each other; both parts should be labeled “meat” or “dairy.” It is possible that the components could be mixed, or that a non-kosher cold portion could be mixed with the kosher hot portion. This is especially true regarding bread, beverages and dessert which may have inadvertently originated from the non-kosher kitchen.¹⁷



Davening - Many hospitals have an on-site non-denominational chapel. Although it is preferable to find another area in which to *daven*, one is permitted to *daven* in such a place in the absence of religious symbols or other worshippers.

In a hospital with a religious affiliation, there may be religious symbols hanging in the patient rooms. If there is no other alternative, one may *daven* in the room and face away from the symbol even if it requires facing a direction other than east.¹⁸

One may not *daven* in the presence of human waste. If he is far enough away where no odor can be detected, and the waste is covered (even in a transparent receptacle), he may *daven* in the room.¹⁹ The bed is not considered a covering for a pan which is placed beneath it.²⁰ A visitor may *daven* in the presence of a catheter.²¹

Kohen - A *kohen* who visits a hospitalized patient may unknowingly be in the presence of a deceased patient.²² This is based on the fact that *tumah* travels through doorways throughout the hospital and can travel from one room to the next, even between floors.²³ It is important to ascertain whether a majority of patients in the hospital are Jewish, as this would present a *halachic* concern. The *kohen* should also try to determine the presence of any deceased patients in the hospital rooms.

A *kohen* should visit a hospital patient only if the majority of patients are not Jewish and there is a great need to do so, e.g. when a relative is ill and family relationships must be considered²⁴ or the patient is seriously ill and requires specific assistance from a *kohen*. If possible, the *kohen* should close the door to any room he enters. It is advisable for a *kohen* to discuss with a *rav* any potential hospital visits prior to his actual visit to the hospital.²⁵

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¹³ M.B. 289:10. If he returns home that night, he should recite the *kiddush* he missed and eat bread. Of course, one should plan ahead and arrange for wine and *challah* at the hospital, if possible.

¹⁴ Mishna Berura 263:28 and Biur Halacha (Bochurim), Toras Hayoledes 38:2.

¹⁵ Toras Hayoledes 38:5. See S.S.K. 43:4, note 22, Responsa Tzitz Eliezer 1:20:11, and Responsa Yabia Omer O.C. 2:17.

¹⁶ An “*eruv chatzeiros*” refers to *matzoh* or bread that has been set aside to allow for carrying between different areas inside a building. This is distinct from what is commonly called an “*eruv*”, which is constructed from poles and wire and permits carrying outside a building. In a hospital, the rooms are not considered different areas since all of the rooms are owned by the hospital and the patients are moved at the hospital’s discretion. See *Beur Halacha* 370:3 (*aiynom*).

¹⁷ Tap water in New York City hospitals may contain water insects called copepods. For a discussion of these insects, see www.star-k.org.

¹⁸ M.B. 94:30.

¹⁹ O.C. 87:3, 76:1. See M.B. 76: 3 and B.H. Siman 79 who cites a dispute if a distance of 4 *amos* is required, as well. In the case of a hospital room, it would seem that one may certainly be lenient.

²⁰ M.B. 87:9.

²¹ *Igros Moshe* O.C. 1:27. He writes that it is preferable to cover it. *Nishmas Avrohom* (O.C. 76:9) cites a ruling from *Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach*, that it is unnecessary to cover it.

²² Limbs, fetuses, and a *goses* (someone in the throes of death) are also sources of *tumah* for a *kohen*.

²³ In U.S. hospitals, *tumah* is often contained to one floor since the law requires that fire doors and stairwell doors be closed at all times. For this reason, the morgue is not usually a concern for someone visiting a patient, since it is on a different floor.

²⁴ *Igros Moshe* Y.D. 2:166, see also Y.D. 1:248. *Tzitz Eliezer* 16:33 takes a somewhat more lenient approach. Also, see *Sefer Taharas Hacohanim* pp 11, 52.

²⁵ The *rav* may inquire as to the layout of the hospital. The concern is

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BIKUR CHOLIM POINTERS

Although 'bikur' is commonly translated as 'visiting', the *Sefer Maavar Yavok* writes that it is derived from the word 'bikoret'-- to research or investigate.²⁶ A visitor should try to determine if there are any patient needs to which he can attend such as arranging for proper nutrition, comfort and cleanliness, or even family needs including child care or coordinating meals. Advice concerning the patient's medical care should be offered only when appropriate, as very often it is not fitting to advise a patient in this regard.²⁷

Before entering the hospital room, one should knock lightly at the entrance to ensure that the patient is ready to receive visitors. Praying for the patient's welfare is a very important part of *bikur cholim*. Someone who visits and does not pray has not fulfilled the *mitzvah*.²⁸ This may consist of a simple *brocho* for a *refuah shelaima*²⁹ or a lengthy recital of *tehillim*, when appropriate.³⁰ When *davening* for the patient while in his presence, he does not need to mention the patient's name.³¹

An important goal of visiting the sick is to bring pleasure and joy to the patient.³² Therefore, a visitor's demeanor should not reflect signs of sadness.³³ One should be a good listener if the patient wants to talk about his illness, but ought not to pry into the details of the illness. The visit should not be lengthy, unless one is specifically requested to stay. A long visit is likely

intensified when visiting an intensive care unit, and extra care should be taken before entering this unit.

²⁶ Cited in *Gesher Hachaim* pg 27.

²⁷ *Gesher Hachaim* pg 28.

²⁸ *Ramo* Y.D. 335:4.

²⁹ *Shulchan Aruch* 335:6 states that one should *daven* that the person be healed, "בתוך שאר חולי ישראל" -- among other ill Jews. Some authorities are mystified as to why many omit this final phrase both in *davening* and every day speech. We suggest the following explanation. Because it is a straightforward phrase, oftentimes one wishes a *refuah shelaima* to people who are not really "cholim" in the true sense of the word, e.g. someone who has a cold. At the same time, one would not want to ascribe the term "choli" to those individuals (See *Nedarim* 40a and *Taz* Y.D. 335:1), as that would imply a more serious condition. Therefore, we simply wish them a "*refuah shelaima*" and omit "בתוך שאר חולי ישראל". After all, even people who are not "cholim" need "*refuah*" in the sense that it means a setting right or fixing -- see *Shulchan Aruch* 6:1, regarding *Asher Yatzar*. However, due to force of habit, people incorrectly continue this practice even when addressing actual "cholim", and leave off the proper "...בתוך".

³⁰ On *Shabbos*, the correct *brocho* is "שבת היא מלועזק ורפואה קרובה לבוא." *Shulchan Aruch, Ramo* O.C. 287.

³¹ *Brochos* 34a, *Mogen Avrohom* O.C. 119 :1. The *tefillah* is more effective when the name is not recited (*Sefer Zichron Meir* pg. 87, quoting the *Chasam Sofer*).

³² *Sefer Zichron Meir* pg 80.

³³ *Gesher Hachaim* pg 28.

³⁴ See *Gesher Hachaim* pg 27, *Sefer Zichron Meir* pp. 77 and 83. The *Rambam* (*Aveilus* 14:6) details the laws of *bikur cholim*, and writes that one should *daven* for the *choleh* "v'yotzeh" - and then leave. *Rav Moshe Heinemann* commented that since obviously one leaves after the visit, this seemingly extra word in the *Rambam* is meant to indicate that he should not linger more than necessary.

to be a burden to the patient.³⁴ In some cases, any visit may be a burden and one should first consult with family members concerning the patient's wishes.³⁵

The patient need not arise when a visitor enters his room, even to honor a *talmid chochom*.³⁶ There is a dispute among authorities as to whether the patient may do so if he wishes, but he is certainly permitted to show honor by raising himself slightly.³⁷

Although it is preferable to visit someone in person, if one is unable to do so or if the patient prefers, one may fulfill the *mitzvah* of *bikur cholim* by telephoning (or emailing) the patient.³⁸ He should also visit a non-Jewish person who is ill (e.g. a neighbor or co-worker) in the interest of *darchei shalom*.³⁹ Since there is often more than one patient assigned to a room, a visitor should also acknowledge the patient's roommate.

Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, penned a response dealing with people who are deaf. He concludes, "I close with a blessing that all this should not be needed, G-d forbid, that there should be no deaf among *klal Yisroel*, and that all the deaf people should be completely healed upon the speedy arrival of *Moshiach*, whom we long for every day, and then this response will remain solely for the sake of the study of *Torah*."⁴⁰ We too pray that this article will not be needed. We eagerly anticipate the days of *Moshiach* when hospitals will no longer be needed and this article will be used exclusively for *Torah* study, rather than for practical use.

To comment on this article email *Rabbi Goldberg* at hospitalguide@star-k.org

³⁵ See *Shulchan Aruch* Y.D. 335:8. Also see *Kovetz Igros Chazon Ish* 1:114, in a letter assumed to be written to *Rav Issur Zalman Meltzer* - "I would have liked to visit...but I have heard the doctors have found that nothing is better than peace and quiet..."

³⁶ If the patient does get up, the visitor should not tell him "shev", sit down, because this also connotes "stay in your illness." (*Ramo* Y.D. 376:1) However, *Rav Moshe Heinemann* distinguishes between the Hebrew word "shev" which one should not use, and the English word "sit" which is permitted, since in English it does not have the same connotation.

³⁷ *Gesher Hachaim* pg 212.

³⁸ *Igros Moshe* Y.D. 1:223.

³⁹ *Gittin* 61, Y.D. 335:9.

⁴⁰ *Igros Moshe* Y.D. 4:49 (end), see *Medrash Tanchuma Metzorah* (2).



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Insights from the Institute

SHAILOS FROM THE INSTITUTE OF HALACHAH



RABBI MORDECHAI FRANKEL
DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF HALACHAH

Q: There is a *brocha* which is recited once a year upon seeing a newly flowering tree. I have a number of questions regarding *Birchas Hailanos*:

(i) When is the optimal time to say this *brocha*? Does the *brocha* have to be said during the month of *Nissan*?

(ii) What rules apply concerning the location of the person when saying the *brocha*? How far away can you be from the tree when saying the *brocha*? Can you be inside a house or other structure? Can you be in a car? Is it necessary to be at a site where there is more than one tree?

(iii) What limitations are there regarding the type of tree over which this *brocha* may be recited? Does the tree need to be fruit bearing? How old should the tree be? Can the tree be *orlah* (less than three years old)? Can the *brocha* be said over blueberries, which are botanically classified as a shrub, or would it be preferable to recite the *brocha* over botanical trees such as a peach or apple tree? Can the *brocha* be said over a crabapple tree, which has fruit that is not palatable without first cooking and sweetening it? Can the *brocha* be said over a cherry blossom tree?

A: (i) *Birchas Hailanos* is recited once a year during the spring when you see a tree that has started to flower.¹ Optimally, the *brocha* should be said at the earliest opportunity upon seeing a budding tree for the first time.² However, if you did not recite the *brocha* at that time you could say the *brocha* on another occasion.³ Some opinions state that one may recite this *brocha* only during the month of *Nissan*.⁴ For this reason, it is customary not to say the *brocha* before the beginning of *Nissan*.⁵ However, the *halachah* follows the opinion that you can also say this *brocha* during other months.⁶ Therefore, if you did not recite the *brocha* during the month of *Nissan* you still have the opportunity to do so. This is especially applicable in those countries where spring does not occur during *Nissan*.⁷ The *brocha* may be said at night if you are able to see the flowers well.⁸ Although there are sources that rule out reciting the *brocha* on *Shabbos*,⁹ the consensus of the *poskim* is that there are no *halachic* concerns with regard to reciting this *brocha* on *Shabbos*.¹⁰ A number of *gedolim* have, in fact, often recited the *brocha* on *Shabbos*.¹¹

(ii) You should be close enough to the tree to see the flowers clearly.¹² If necessary, you may be inside a house or building when saying the *brocha*.¹³ It is preferable to stand while saying the *brocha*, although it is not necessary to do so.¹⁴ There are sources which suggest reciting the *brocha* over a field of trees, or at least two trees that are in close proximity.¹⁵ However, there is no *halachic* requirement to do so and one may recite the *brocha* over one tree.¹⁶

(iii) The *brocha* is recited only over a fruit bearing tree.¹⁷ The *brocha* should not be said over a tree that is so old that it no longer produces edible fruit.¹⁸ There is a discussion among the *poskim* concerning whether or not the *brocha* may be said over

a tree which is *orlah*.¹⁹ However, if you do not know the age of the tree, and there is merely a concern that the tree might be *orlah*, you may say the *brocha*.²⁰ You may recite the *brocha* over anything that *halachah* would define as a tree. Presumably, this would be defined as anything to which the *halachah* of *orlah* applies, and would include blueberries.²¹ You may recite the *brocha* over any tree which produces fruit that may be made edible. Therefore, if a crabapple tree produces fruit that would be processed and made into an edible food, the *brocha* could be recited over such a tree.²² A cherry blossom tree does not produce cherries and, in fact, does not produce any edible fruit. This should not be confused with a cherry tree, which does produce edible fruit. Therefore, the *brocha* may not be recited over a cherry blossom tree, but may be recited over a cherry tree.

Halachic queries regarding all topics may be presented to The Institute of Halachah at the Star-K by calling 410-484-4110 ext. 238 or emailing halachah@star-k.org.

¹ שרע ארח סי רכו טעי א' 2 לחוש לדעת הגמרא הובא בשערי צדק סי ק' ג' מיב שם סי ק' ה' ע' כף החיים שם סי ק' א' ושדי חמד חיה עמי' 263 (ובפסקי תשובות סי רכו הביא לדברי השו"ת חמד הנ"ל, וכן כמה מן המראה מקומות המובאים להלן הם ע"פ דברי הפוסקים תשובות) ע' בשרת מנחת יצחק ח"ג סי כה ובשרת יחזה דעת ח"א סי א, ובארות רבינו ח"ג עמי רכז כתב "כדומה לו שמיר (מין הסטייפל) זקוק לבריאותו נהג לברך לכתחלה ברכת פרחי האילנות בראש חודש ניסן" מיב סי רכו סי ק' א ורוך השלחן טעי א, ועי' בשרת צ"ץ אליעזר חלק יב סי כ ובשרת יחזה דעת שם, ועי' בחי חתום על השרע שם מש"כ בשם ר' נתן אדלר 7 שרת מנחת יצחק ח"ג סי טו 8 שרת צ"ץ אליעזר שם אות ו 9 כף החיים סי רכו סי ק' ד 10 עי' בשרת יחזה דעת ח"א סי ב 11 בהלכות שלמה על תפלה עמי רפט כתב שהגרש"ז אייער באך זצ"ל היה מברך אף בשבת, ועוד כתב שם בשם נפש דוד להאדיר שיהיה מחדר לברכה בשבת כדי להשלים מאה ברכות 12 באשל אברהם מבוטשטש סדר רכו כתב "לגבי ברכה העיקר בראה מפורשת ממש" 13 לא ראונו שום קפידא בזה 14 הפמ"ג בפתחה להל' ברכות אות יח כתב "ברכת שבח רשאי יושב לבד ברכת הלבה מעומד", אולם דעת מר"ר ר' היינעמאן שליט"א שלכתחלה נכון לעמוד, ועי' בשרת תשובות והנהגות ח"ג סי עו שכתב שראוי לכתחלה לעמוד בברכת השבח, ועי' בשרת רבבות אפרים ח"ג סי תט אות ו שהגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל נהג לעמוד לברכת בריקים ורעמים 15 כף החיים סי רכו סי ק' א וסי ק' ב, ועי' בשרת צ"ץ אליעזר חלק יב סי ק' כ, ובספר הליכות שלמה על תפלה עמי רפט כתב שהגרש"ז אייער באך זצ"ל הודיר לברך בראות שתי אילנות 16 בשרת רבבות אפרים ח"ג סי עו כתב שראה הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל מברך על אילן אחד 17 במיב סי רכו סי ק' ב כתב דדוקא באילני מאכל מברכים אבל אילני סרק לא, ועי' בשרת שבט הלוי ח"ג סי נג אות ד שצדד שאם טעה ויברך על אילני סרק לא יחזור ויברך שנית 18 עי' בשרת להורות נתן ח"ג סי ח וסי ט 19 בהגי רע"א על השרע סי רכו כתב "אם האילנות תוך ג' שנים לנטעיתן אני מסתפק אם יברך כיון דאי' ליהנות מפריה, ובכף החיים שם סי ק' א יסק שלא לברך, אולם בשרת דובב משמים ח"ג סי ה כתב דאשפר לברך על אילנות ערלה 20 בהגי רע"א שם כתב "היכא דהוי ספק ניל דיברך ולא מקרי ספק ברכה כיון דהדין דספק ערלה בחריל מותר איך ראוי ליהנות ממנו ומבשר שפיר", ובשרת חלקת יעקב ארח סי נו כתב דפשיטא שיש להלך לברך על אילנות ערלה בחריל, ולכאורה צ"ע שהרי רע"א לא התיי' אלא בספק ערלה בחריל אבל בודאי ערלה מספקא ליה, ועי' במקור חיים להורות יאיר (בקיצור הלכות) שכתב שאף באי יש לברך על אילנות ספק ערלה כיון שהוא מיעוט שאינו מצוי שילבלת האילנות תוך ג' שנים 21 כן שמעתי מר' היינעמאן שליט"א, ולגבי הפרי הנקרא ראסבערי יש לציון שבספר ותן ברכה ל"י פנחס באדנער עמי 395 כתב בשם הגרש"ז אייער באך זצ"ל שאין בדינו להכירע אם נקרא יש ולענין ערלה בחריל ספק ערלה מותר אפשר להלך אבל באי שספק ערלה אסור צ"ע ואין לנו הכרעה 22 שמעתי מר' היינעמאן שליט"א שאם הדרך לעשות דבר מאכל מאותו מין פרי, מותר לברך עליו ברכת האילנות

Machine Matzohs: Timing Is Everything!



RABBI TZVI ROSEN

EDITOR, KASHRUS KURRENTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The *Gra*, *Mogen Avrom*³ and others maintain that a *mil* is 22.5 minutes. Although conventional wisdom, belief and advertisement have indicated that all the *mehadrin* machine matzohs are “18 minute matzohs”, are all 18 minute machine matzohs created equal?

When a hand matzoh bakery claims that their matzohs are “18 minute matzohs”, from which moment are the 18 minutes measured? In a U.S. hand matzoh bakery, such as *Tzelem Pupa*, the 18 minute segments are measured from the time the water is poured onto the flour to knead the mixture into dough until the last matzoh reaches the oven. From the time that the flour and water are mixed, the matzoh baking team has 18 minutes to knead, roll, perforate and bake the matzohs. After 18 minutes, the entire operation stops and the cleaning process begins. When this is finished, the next 18 minute segment commences.

This is not the case with machine matzohs. In regular machine matzoh production, matzohs continue to be produced all day long with intermittent cleaning a few times a day; the machines do not stop. Mixing bowls in non-*mehadrin* bakeries are cleaned every 18 minutes.

This is not the case with *mehadrin* machine matzohs. Most *mehadrin* machine matzohs come from *Eretz Yisroel*. ‘*Mehadrin*’ machine matzoh bakeries stop and clean after every segment. However, they utilize both time estimations of a *mil* for their matzoh production. Matzoh baking can be broken down into

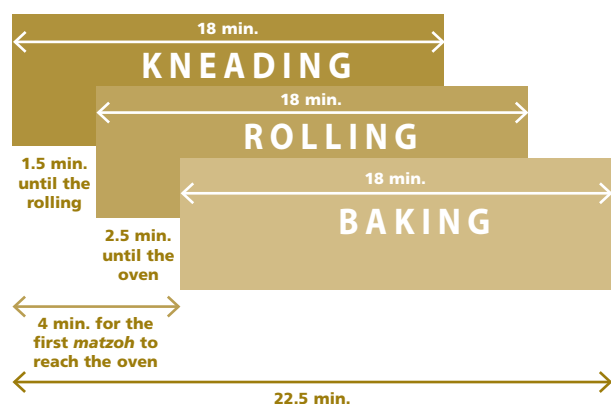
three parts: kneading, rolling and baking, which overlap one another (see chart). It takes approximately 1 ½ minutes for the first kneaded dough to reach the roller, and an additional 2 ½ minutes of rolling and sheeting for the first matzoh to reach the oven. In total, it takes approximately 4 minutes for the first matzoh to reach the oven, and 30 seconds for the matzoh to be baked. In a machine matzoh production, the matzohs are continuously kneaded, rolled and baked for an entire 22.5 minute segment – the *Gra*’s estimation of a *mil*. However, each part of the 22.5 minute segment concludes within 18 minutes, allowing enough time for the last matzohs to be rolled and baked within 22.5 minutes (see chart).

In these bakeries, the first 4 minutes of kneading are not calculated in the “18 minute count” because the *halacha* states that *chimutz* (leavening) does not begin if the dough is constantly being worked. This is what is happening during the kneading and rolling processes; therefore, the 18 minute segment begins when the initial matzoh starts baking. The entire segment takes 22.5 minutes, which is in compliance with the 22.5 minute *mil*. However, each part of the segment lasts no longer than 18 minutes; hence, the bakeries call their matzohs “18 minute matzohs”. This holds true for both regular (*peshutos*) and *shmura mehadrin* machine matzohs. The only 18 minute machine matzohs that are calculated from the time the flour and water are mixed, as is done in hand matzoh bakeries, are *chabura matzohs*.

What are *chabura matzohs*? Many matzoh bakeries allow *chaburos*, individual groups, to rent time in a bakery to bake their own matzohs. When *chaburos* bake matzohs, they start calculating the 18 minutes from the time that the flour and water are mixed. Their clean-up time is longer than the regular non-*chabura* productions. Typically, a machine matzoh clean-up takes 10 minutes between segments; a *chabura* clean-up can take up to 45 minutes. When machine matzohs (such as Hadar, B’tam, Jerusalem or Yehuda) advertise on the box “18 minute matzohs”, they are using the 22.5 minute standard (unless the box states “*chabura* 18 minute matzohs” or *Chabura* brand 18 minute machine matzohs), indicating that it is an 18 minute segment from start to finish.

All of the *mehadrin* machine matzoh bakeries possess very reliable kosher supervision. However, the kosher consumer should realize that not all *mehadrin* machine matzohs are created equal.

THE THREE PART SEQUENCE OF A MACHINE MATZOH SEGMENT



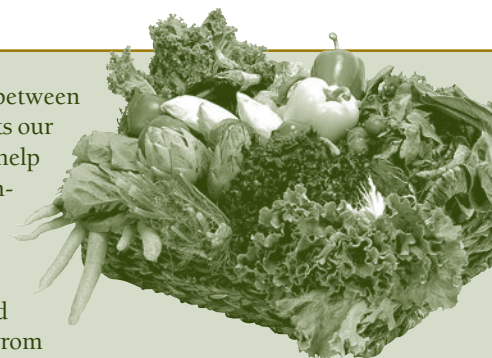
³ O.C. 459:2; *Biur Halacha* ibid.

STAR-K Announces New Joint Kosher Organic Program

BY MARGIE PENSAK

STAR-K and Quality Assurance International (QAI) recently announced a new joint kosher and organic auditing program, offering several advantages to the growing numbers of companies worldwide that opt for both organic and kosher certification. The rapidly rising parallel global demand for each of these certifications has created a flourishing new specialty food category, “Kosher Organic”, which meet both the strict requirements of Jewish dietary laws and the USDA National Organic Program specifications.

“The new alliance between STAR-K and QAI highlights our shared commitment to help companies provide high-quality kosher certified organic products, in a more efficient and cost-effective manner,” said STAR-K President Dr. Avrom Pollak. “Like STAR-K, QAI is dedicated to helping consumers know that they are getting real value from certified products. Having realized that many companies have both certifications, we feel that the bundling of our certification efforts will add further efficiency and value on behalf of consumers throughout the world.”



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To apply to the Star-K Kashrus Training Program, call the Star-K office for an application at 410-484-4110 and speak with Rabbi Zvi Goldberg, or go to www.star-k.com to download the application form.



Star-K's ongoing TeleKosher Conference Series for consumers is scheduled for the last Wednesday of each month at 12 Noon EST, hosted by Rabbi Zvi Goldberg. To join the conference, call 1-605-475-8590 and enter conference 528-5502#. Now also accessible online – go to www.star-k.org/telekosher for details. Brought to you by www.Kosherclasses.org.

Women's Mashgicha Conference

Star-K is planning a two-day training program in our corporate office for women currently employed as *mashgichos* worldwide. The curriculum will include *kashrus* procedures, insect checking and visits to food service establishments. This program is tentatively scheduled for Fall 2009, if there is sufficient interest. Please contact our office at 410-484-4110 or star-k@star-k.org.

A Pesach Must For Every Jewish Home! STAR-K 2009 PESACH GUIDE

The Pesach Guide will be available
 in Jewish bookstores after Purim.

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 Kollel Bais Avrohom Los Angeles



Star-K Kosher Certification

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FOUNDING EDITOR:
A.J. Levin

EDITOR:
Rabbi Tzvi Rosen

COPY EDITOR:
Mrs. Pesi Herskovitz

COORDINATOR:
Ms. D. Rosenstein

CONTRIBUTING WRITER:
Mrs. Margie Pensak

Phone: (410) 484-4110
 Fax: (410) 653-9294
 E-mail: info@star-k.org
www.star-k.org

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 (The Star-K Passover Book, not included in this subscription, is available for purchase in Jewish bookstores during the Passover season.)

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