The Halachos and Kashrus of Chocolate
HALACHICALLY SPEAKING

- Halachically Speaking is a monthly publication compiled by Rabbi Moishe Dovid Lebovits, a former chaver kollel of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath and a musmach of Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. Rabbi Lebovits currently works as the Rabbinical Administrator for the KOF-K Kosher Supervision.

- Each issue reviews a different area of contemporary halacha with an emphasis on practical applications of the principles discussed. Significant time is spent ensuring the inclusion of all relevant shittos on each topic, as well as the psak of Harav Yisroel Belsky, Shlita on current issues.

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A visitor to a supermarket is struck by the vast array of chocolate items for sale, such as candies, chocolate cake, chocolate milk, chocolate cookies and the like. There is also a vast array of halachic issues which apply to chocolate. Is one allowed to drink hot chocolate before davening? What beracha is made on chocolate? Is a beracha achrona recited on hot cocoa? What beracha is made on chocolate covered products, such as chocolate covered raisins? How is a chocolate machine kashered? Does bishul akum apply to chocolate? These questions as well as others will be answered at length in this article.

Background – Chocolate Manufacturing

Chocolate is born in a cacao tree. The tree produces a fruit about the size of a small pineapple. Inside the fruit are the seeds known as cocoa beans. The beans are roasted to bring out the flavor, and are then winnowed to remove the meat of the bean from the shell. This is known as a nib. Cocoa beans are half fat. Therefore, the nibs turn into a liquid when ground, called chocolate liquor. If the chocolate liquor were allowed to cool and solidify, it would be unsweetened chocolate. Another option is to squeeze out the fat from the cocoa bean. The resulting dry bean can be ground into cocoa powder.

Our chocolate products have added ingredients such as sugar, milk (see below), and other flavors. The chocolate goes into a conch, which is a machine that refines the
chocolate and blends it into a smooth paste (see below regarding kashrus). Milk chocolate is a combination of chocolate liquor, milk, sugar and cocoa.

Drinking Hot Chocolate Before Davening

Since hot chocolate is a rich drink made with a lot of milk, it is questionable if it is permitted to drink prior to davening.

Beracha on a Hot Drink

One should make sure that he can drink the beverage before reciting the beracha.\(^1\) Therefore, one should allow his hot cocoa to cool before reciting a beracha.

Chocolate During a Meal

One who eats chocolate during a bread meal must recite a shehakol on it, as it is not covered by the beracha recited on bread.\(^2\)

Beracha on Chocolate

The halacha is that a food which is normally consumed only after being ground retains its original beracha.\(^3\) The Shulchan Aruch\(^4\) applies this to sweetened ground spices. Since spices are routinely powdered, the beracha is ha’etz. Accordingly, the beracha rishona on chocolate should be a ha’etz since it comes from the cocoa bean which is the fruit of a tree.\(^5\) However, the overwhelming custom is to recite a shehakol on chocolate since the bean is altered

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5. Refer to Mekor Haberacha 21, Chai Ha’Levi 2:19, Ohr Yitzchok 57.
when it is processed into chocolate. Others explain that the chocolate in the bean is not eaten as is, and is mixed with other ingredients. Therefore, it is considered the miyut (minor ingredient) and the beracha is a shehakol. Another explanation is that when the bean is modified to the liquid state, it is a new entity which is not recognizable that it came from a bean at all. Therefore, its beracha would change to a shehakol. In any case, the custom is to recite a shehakol on chocolate.

**B’dieved**

One who recited a ha’etz on chocolate was yotzei b’dieved and does not have to recite a shehakol.

**Beracha Achrona**

There is a big discussion in the poskim regarding a beracha achrona on a hot drink (i.e. coffee, tea or hot cocoa), since one does not drink the liquid within the allotted shiur (kedi sh’tiyas reviis). Some say that since these beverages...
are intended to be consumed hot, a beracha achrona may be recited, as it is the derech to sip them slowly.\textsuperscript{13} However, the opinion of many poskim is that a beracha achrona is not recited.\textsuperscript{14} Others say that in order to go satisfy all opinions, one should let a revis of the drink cool off at the end and recite a boreh nefoshos on that shiur.\textsuperscript{15} Some poskim suggest that one should put a sugar cube in his mouth so that the beracha achrona on the sugar will exempt the coffee, tea or hot cocoa.\textsuperscript{16}

**Sucking on Chocolate**

No beracha achrona is recited if one sucks on chocolate without biting it, since it is not the normal manner of eating.\textsuperscript{17} In addition, the amount of chocolate that would require a beracha achrona is not consumed within the shiur of kedei achilas pras.

\textsuperscript{13} Maharam Shik O.C. 85, Melamed L’huyel O.C. 1:25, opinion of Harav Wosner Shlita quoted in Sharei Ha’beracha page 304:footnote 42. Refer to Halachos Ketanos 1:9, Sharei Teshuva 204:12, Panim M’eros 2:27, Shulchan Aruch Harav in Seder Birchos Haneinen 8:6, Da’as Torah 204:7, Teshuvos V’hanhugos 2:135 quoting the opinions of the Chasam Sofer and the Divrei Chaim, Pnei Ha’shulchan pages 284-285, Betzel Hachuchmah 3:114-5, Shevet Ha’Levi 1:42:13. The opinion of Harav Wosner Shlita is that a boreh nefoshos is recited even if it took longer than the shiur of sh’tiyas revis (Quoted in Sharei Ha’beracha page 304:footnote 42. The reason is because some say the shiur that one has to drink is from 2-9 minutes). Opinion of the father of the Piskei Teshuvos quoted in Piskei Teshuvos 68:footnote 23, opinions of Harav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Vezos Ha’beracha page 227, Shemiras Shabbos K’hillchos 5:footnote 96 quoting the opinion of Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt”l. See Maharam Shik O.C. 263, Divrei Yisroel 3:159:2. Some say one should drink it within two minutes (Refer to Vezos Ha’beracha page 228, Avnei Yushfei 1:41).

\textsuperscript{14} Ben Ish Chai Massei 1:9, Birchei Yosef 204:5, Moreh B’etzbah 3:96, Chudim Adom 50:15, Nishmas Adom 1:50:5, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 51:6, Mishnah Berurah 210:1, Aruch Ha’shulchan 202:7, Kaf Ha’chaim 204:40, Yabea Omer O.C. 5:18 in great depth, Rivevos Ephraim 1:131:4, 5:166, 8:86, see 8:475, Even Pina 1:9:page 9, Ohr L’tzion 2:14:27, Yabea Omer O.C. 5:18. Some say no beracha achrona is recited on coffee even one one has ice coffee since one is not used to making a beracha achrona on it (Ohr L’tzion ibid:footnote 27).

\textsuperscript{15} Be’er Heitiv 204:12, Mishnah Berurah 210:1, Birchos Habayis 16:14, Yabea Omer O.C. 5:18, Rivevos Ephraim 2:77:page 129. see Aruch Ha’shulchan ibid.

\textsuperscript{16} Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Maharam Shik O.C. 85.

\textsuperscript{17} Yabea Omer O.C. 8:25:2:6, Chazzon Ovadia Berachos page 146.
Chocolate Products

Chocolate Covered Raisins - If one likes both the raisins and the chocolate, the opinion of Harav Moshe Feinstein zt”l\(^{18}\) is that two berachos are recited. First recite a shehakol on the chocolate, and then a ha’etz on the raisin. When reciting the shehakol, one should have in mind not to exempt the raisins with the beracha.

Many say that a beracha is only recited on the majority ingredient,\(^{19}\) which is defined by personal preferences. If one likes both raisins and chocolate, and views the chocolate as enhancing the raisin, then the ha’etz on the raisin will exempt the chocolate from a beracha. If he views the raisin as an enhancer, then the shehakol on the chocolate will exempt the raisin from a beracha.\(^{20}\)

The same discussion applies to chocolate covered fruits or other items.

Chocolate Bar with Almonds - Almonds in a chocolate bar are the minority and an enhancing ingredient; therefore, the shehakol on the chocolate covers the almonds as well.\(^{21}\)

Chocolate Covered Peels - A food which is normally not eaten alone and is covered in chocolate would only require a shehakol on the chocolate. One example is chocolate covered orange peels.\(^{22}\)

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19. V’sein Beracha page 417:footnote 61 quoting the opinion of Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt”l, Vezos Ha’beracha page 97 quoting the opinions of Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt”l and Harav Elyashiv Shlita. Refer to Star-K Kashrus Kurrents (topic: The Sweetest Fruit of Them All) quoting the opinion of Harav Moshe Heinemann Shlita.
20. V’sein Beracha page 417. See Pischei Halacha (Berochos) page 345 who says chocolate covered almonds are a ha’etz.
**Chocolate Milk** - The *beracha* on chocolate milk is a *shehakol*.\(^{23}\)

Many chocolate products made by Elite in *Eretz Yisroel* state the *beracha* on the package.

**Hilchos Shabbos – Coloring - Losh**

Most *poskim* say that just as there is no problem of coloring food (according to most *poskim*) on *Shabbos*, there is also no problem of coloring drinks.\(^{24}\) Others say that coloring drinks would be problematic.\(^{25}\)

The *poskim* say there is no concern of coloring liquids when putting milk into black coffee,\(^{26}\) or with placing chocolate syrup into milk. (However, one must avoid any problems of *losh*).\(^{27}\)

**Writing with Chocolate Syrup**

Some desserts are decorated with a chocolate swirl. The question is whether this is considered writing, which would be forbidden on *Shabbos*,\(^{28}\) or if it is a simple decoration.

The opinion of *Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita* is that this is permitted.\(^{29}\)

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23. Refer to *Shulchan Aruch* 204:1.
Breaking Chocolate with Letters on it

It is very common for chocolate to have images or letters engraved in the chocolate itself. There is a big discussion in the poskim whether one may break food with letters written on top, or if it is considered “erasing” on Shabbos.30

The advice of the Mishnah Berurah31 is that if the letters are not part of the food itself,32 then one may not break the food; he may only place the food in his mouth, even though the letters or image will break.33 A food which has writing engraved in it may be broken on Shabbos.34 One is permitted to allow a young child to take a piece of food that contains letters even if he is going to break the letters.35

Kashrus of Chocolate – Kashering

Besides dairy chocolate, many products are made with pareve chocolate. Therefore, a company would need to kasher the equipment if it wishes to make both dairy and pareve on the same machinery.36 Most of the production of chocolate does not require heat except the conch (see

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30. Refer to Rama O.C. 340:3, Chazzon Ish O.C. 61:1, Yabea Omer O.C. 4:38 who brings the opinions.
31. O.C. 340:17, see Chazzon Ish 61:1. Others argue and say one should break the letters on Erev Shabbos (Orchos Rabbeinu 1:page 167:249).
32. Magen Avraham 6, Mishnah Berurah 15, opinion of Harav Korelitz Shlita (Chut Shuni Shabbos 1:page 161). The Aruch Ha’ashulchan 23 says people are not careful with this.
33. The Yabea Omer O.C. 4:38 says if the letters etc are engraved in the chocolate etc then it is permitted to break with ones hands. If the lettering etc is on top of the chocolate etc then one should be stringent and break it while in is mouth.
34. Magen Avraham 6, Mishnah Berurah 15, Ohr L’tzyion 2:40:1, Nishmas Shabbos 7:86, opinion of Harav Korelitz Shlita (Chut Shuni Shabbos 1:page 161). The Aruch Ha’ashulchan 23 says people are not careful with this. The Kaf Ha’chaim 340:61 says those who are stringent are better. Refer to Har Tzvi O.C. 214 in regard to candies. See Tzitz Eliezer 11:20:2, Chazzon Ish 61:1, Nishmas Shabbos 7:97.
36. Refer to B’nisiv Ha’chalav pages 66-68 in regard to hagolah with chocolate made from chalav stam.
above). Chocolate companies are unwilling to introduce water to the chocolate machines, since it can potentially damage the product. An alternative may be to run chocolate through the system once and consider it *kasherred*. However, this approach is a dispute among *poskim*.

The *Rama*\(^{37}\) says that one should not *kasher* with any liquid other than water,\(^{38}\) but *bidieved* one is allowed to use “other liquids” to *kasher*.\(^{39}\) A pressing situation has the status of *bidieved*.\(^{40}\) Based on the above, some *kashrus* organizations permit a company to make dairy and *pareve* chocolate on the same equipment after a “*kashering*” of chocolate in between.\(^{41}\) Those who do *kasher* with chocolate do not have to wait twenty-four hours before *kashering*.\(^{42}\)

The opinion of the OU is that since chocolate becomes solid at room temperature it may not be used for *kashering*.\(^{43}\) This applies even if one were to follow those opinions that permit *kashering* with other liquids.\(^{44}\) Therefore, their policy is to have two separate systems for *pareve* and

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37. O.C. 452:5, Shulchan Aruch Harav 28, Aruch Ha’shalucha 19. For those who are lenient to *kasher* with “other liquids” refer to Pri Chadash 452:5, Kaf Ha’chaim 452:58, Hagalas Meilim page 226:footnote 1.

38. Refer to Mishnah Berurah 25.

39. Rama ibid, Shulchan Aruch Harav ibid, Mishnah Berurah 26, Shar Ha’tzyion 29, Aruch Ha’shalucha 19, Igros Moshe Y.D.


41. Included in this are the *Badatz* of *Yerushalayim* and other European *hechsherim* (The Laws of Pesach: A Digest 2006 page 592, opinion of Dayan Westheim Shlita). Shufra Chocolate only manufactures *pareve* chocolate and do not have dairy in the plant (ibid page 594). Schmerling is *kasherred* with water or *libun* (fire) (ibid page 594).

42. Mesora 7:page 75:6. Those who eat from companies who use chocolate as *kashering* do not have to wait after eating meat before eating this chocolate (Mesora 7:pages 74-75).


44. OU document I-14:page 4.
dairy chocolate. Many other kashrus agencies follow this opinion.

**Chocolate Candies for Children after Meat**

A child three years and younger does not have to wait between eating meat and dairy. One may feed him dairy directly after meat if this is good for the child. However, the child’s mouth should be cleaned out well. A child over three years old should be trained according to his ability to wait additional time, increasing the time each year. A child 9-10 years old should wait the appropriate six hours. Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita holds that the child should wait six hours when he starts going to school (This is approximately 6-7 years old).

Some say that a child should not be given dairy chocolate candies until six hours have elapsed since he ate meat, since it is not something he really needs (i.e. supper).

**Bishul Akum**

Chocolate which is eaten as snack is not subject to the halachos of bishul akum since snacks are not fit to be served

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46. Such as the KOF-K, and Star-K.
47. Yalkut Yosef pages 393-395, Divrei Chachumim Y.D. 1:2, Ve’aleihu Lo Yeibol 2:page 64:4. Refer to Nezer Ha’chaim page 214:155 who maintains that even a young one day old has to wait six hours before eating milk. This is not the minhag.
48. See Chanoch L’nar 29:footnote 1, Be’er Moshe 8:36:4, Shevet Ha’Levi 4:84, see Massei Ish 3:page 147.
50. Badi Ha’shulchan 37.
at a king’s table. In the event that one is eating a fancy chocolate served at a glamorous meal, then *bishul akum* may apply. However, since the heat from the conches (see above) is generated from the friction of the rollers, it is comparable to an alternative method of cooking which is not subject to *bishul akum*. Some say that since chocolate is a sweet and not eaten together with bread, it is not subject to *bishul akum*.

Chocolate syrup is not subject to *bishul akum* since it is eaten as a *tafel* to other foods at a meal.

**Milk Chocolate**

Milk chocolate is manufactured with powdered milk, as are various cakes and cookies. Powered milk is made by spraying milk into a spray dryer, which turns the milk into a powder. Many *poskim* are of the opinion that one who is *makpid* to avoid drinking *chalav stam* should not consume powered milk. Although some *poskim* are lenient, the overwhelming custom is to be stringent.

**Chocolate “Gelt”**

Chanukah chocolate gelt sometimes has the words “in G-d we trust” stamped on it. The question arises whether one is allowed to eat it, since he is erasing the name of

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56. OU document M-7.
Hashem (albeit in a different language).\(^{59}\) Some say that l’chatchilah one should not purchase such chocolates; however, if they were already purchased they can be eaten, for eating is not considered erasing since it is the normal manner to eat it.\(^{60}\) Others say that one can purchase it even l’chatchilah and rely on those poskim who maintain that it is permitted to erase the name of Hashem in a different language. This seems to be the custom of most people.\(^{61}\)

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60. Ve’aleihu Lo Yeibol 2:page 120:119.

61. Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.
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