

Q&A from the Bais HaVaad Halacha Hotline

Leaven Scent

March 26, 2026

Q I live near a non-Jewish bakery and enjoy the aroma of freshly-baked bread that wafts into the street as I pass by. May I do this on Pesach?

A Chametz is *asur behana'ah* (forbidden to derive benefit from), whether it is owned by a Jew or a non-Jew (see Rivash 400).



The Gemara (Psachim 25b) discusses whether smelling the fragrance of the *ketoress* constitutes *hana'ah* in the context of *me'ilah behekdesh*. It concludes that it does, so it is *asur mideOreisa* to smell the *ketoress* before it is burned. (Afterward, the smoke is not *hekdesh*.) In line with this, the Rashba (3:234; codified in Y.D. 108:7) forbids smelling perfumes made from *orlah* or *kilayim* produce, which are *asur behana'ah*.

But many *Rishonim* distinguish between items made for their fragrance—such as the *ketoress* spices—and items made for another purpose (see Bais Yosef Y.D. *ibid.* and Shach *ibid.* 27). It can be argued that baked goods are made for consumption rather than fragrance, but, as noted by the Biur Halacha (443:1), the point is debated. Practically, the *Acharonim* advise that one should not intentionally smell pleasant-scented chametz on Pesach (Chok Yaakov 447:10).

In your case, avoid intentionally enjoying the aroma, but you need not go to Florida for Yom Tov to escape it. The Gemara (Psachim *ibid.*) says one may walk through an area with a forbidden fragrance like *avodah zarah* incense if it is a *davar she'eino miskavein* (he doesn't intentionally enjoy the scent). Even if an alternate route is available, one is not obligated to change his path. The same applies to chametz (Maharsham, Da'as Torah 447:1).