Traditional Cheeses and Gevinat Akum

Understanding authentic cheeses and generic versions

Certain authentic traditional cheeses are likely to fall within the halachic category of *gevina* and, when made by a non-Jew, be subject to the rabbinic prohibition of *gevinat akum*.

Many traditional European cheeses carry protected designations such as **DOP, AOP, or PDO**. These identify cheeses produced under established regional and manufacturing rules. A generic cheese sold under a similar name is not necessarily the same product.

Traditional cheeses to presume problematic

For the authentic versions below, assume *gevinat akum* when made by a non-Jew, unless specific information establishes otherwise:

- Parmigiano Reggiano DOP
- Pecorino Romano DOP
- Roquefort AOP
- Gorgonzola DOP
- Grana Padano DOP
- Le Gruyère AOP
- Comté AOP
- Brie de Meaux AOP
- Tête de Moine AOP
- Cantal AOP (aged Entre-Deux and Vieux)
- Castelmagno DOP

Generic versions: permitted in cases of doubt

A supermarket cheese labeled “Gruyere,” “Parmesan,” “Romano,” or another familiar name, **without being the authentic protected product**, should not automatically receive the same halachic classification. Its ingredients and production method may differ substantially.

When there is no readily available information showing that the generic cheese is made in the relevant traditional manner, its status is doubtful. Since *gevinat akum* is a rabbinic prohibition, we apply ***safek derabbanan lekula*** and permit the generic version. If reliable information establishes that it is made in the relevant manner, it must be evaluated accordingly.

Not an exhaustive list. These are the traditional cheeses identified so far; other cheeses may also fall into this category.