

K[®]OSHER SPiRiT

תשרי תשע"ו
TISHREI 5776

CERTIFIED SOUL NUTRITION



*WISHING YOU
A HAPPY,
HEALTHY, &
SWEET NEW
YEAR*

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By Rabbi Chaim Fogelman



Dear Reader,

As Rosh Hashanah rapidly approaches we look forward to the New Year and to the blessings and challenges that lie ahead.

Last year was *shmitta*, the sabbatical year, and it presented its fair share of kashrus complexities. One might think we are now out of the woods, so to speak, but the year after *shmitta* has its own set of challenges to deal with.

Many products that will be available this year were actually grown during *shmitta*, from the wine for *kiddush* and even the *esrogim* we will use on Sukkos (see Kosher Spirit, Fall 2008/Tishrei 5769, <http://www.kosherspirit.com/Article.asp?Issue=14&Article=171>).

This is the year when we must pay closer attention to even the everyday products that we are so used to eating and drinking on a regular basis. For example, some wines may not carry certification this year because the grapes were grown during *shmitta*. This is addressed in the article by Maayan Meir from our office in Israel, which discusses the eighth year and the protocols that ☞ Kosher has implemented to ensure that the kosher consumer has the kosher products he needs without any compromise.

Benjamin Franklin once said, "by failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." How true this statement is! Preparation is the key to success – when we set up manufacturers of food products for kosher certification or prepare for the year of *shmitta* and for this coming year of *Hakhel*, much thought and effort goes into all the details. As the famous saying goes, "Preparation positions you for prosperity." With our adherence to this principle, and all of the hard work we put in, we are destined for greatness.

May we all be blessed with a prosperous year, with an abundance of health, happiness, and much time to enjoy it all.

Chaim Fogelman
Editor in Chief

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

Rabbi Chaim Fogelman

EDITOR:

Dina Fraenkel

DESIGN:

Spotlight Design

We welcome your comments, submissions and letters to the editor.

Mail: 391 Troy Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11213

Email: editor@kosherspirit.com

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Share Your Spirit

Readers share their thoughts...

Chabad of Mid-Hudson Valley recently hosted its first Kosher Week exhibit, sponsored by © Kosher, at Shoprite in Fishkill, NY.

Many brochures & copies of *Kosher Spirit* were distributed and a video presentation about the meaning of kosher played in the background. Donated samples of kosher food were distributed to customers as they came to see the booth. Many expressed an interest in keeping kosher.



Students from Oholei Torah Yeshiva visited © Headquarters for a tour and class about kosher supervision.

The ® receives many letters/emails with kosher questions...

Consumer Questions for the ®

Does beer require a *hechsher*?

The ® Responds:

Historically, Orthodox Jews have drunk beer without any kosher certification. In our times, most people look for a kosher certification even on water! Beer is a lot more complicated than water and there are various kosher concerns that can come up in production. Domestic (American) unflavored beer should have a kosher certification, even those produced by the major brands. The laws in Europe are very strict when it comes to the manufacturing of beer; however, in the United States the manufacturing process is not so heavily dictated by the government and there is a lot more room for ingredient variations. European beers (produced in Europe) do not generally have these ingredient issues and, therefore, would not have a kashrus issue.

Domestic light beer should never be drunk without a reliable kosher certification and the same applies to domestic flavored beers or beers from domestic micro-breweries. There is a reason that micro brews and flavored beers have such unique tastes, and it's not only due to the way the hops are fermented. Most of these specialty beers include a variety of added flavorings that are quite kosher sensitive. All domestic light, flavored and micro brews definitely require reliable kosher supervision.

FASTING TIPS

THE COCONUT WATER CRAZE

GOCONUTS ARE NOT ACTUALLY NUTS, THEY ARE DRUPES.

GOCONUT WATER CONTAINS 5 ELECTROLYTES: SODIUM, MAGNESIUM, CALCIUM, POTASSIUM AND PHOSPHORUS. ALL OF THESE HELP KEEP YOU HYDRATED.

GOCONUT WATER HAS ONLY 5 GRAMS OF SUGAR PER SERVING AND IS LOW IN CALORIES.

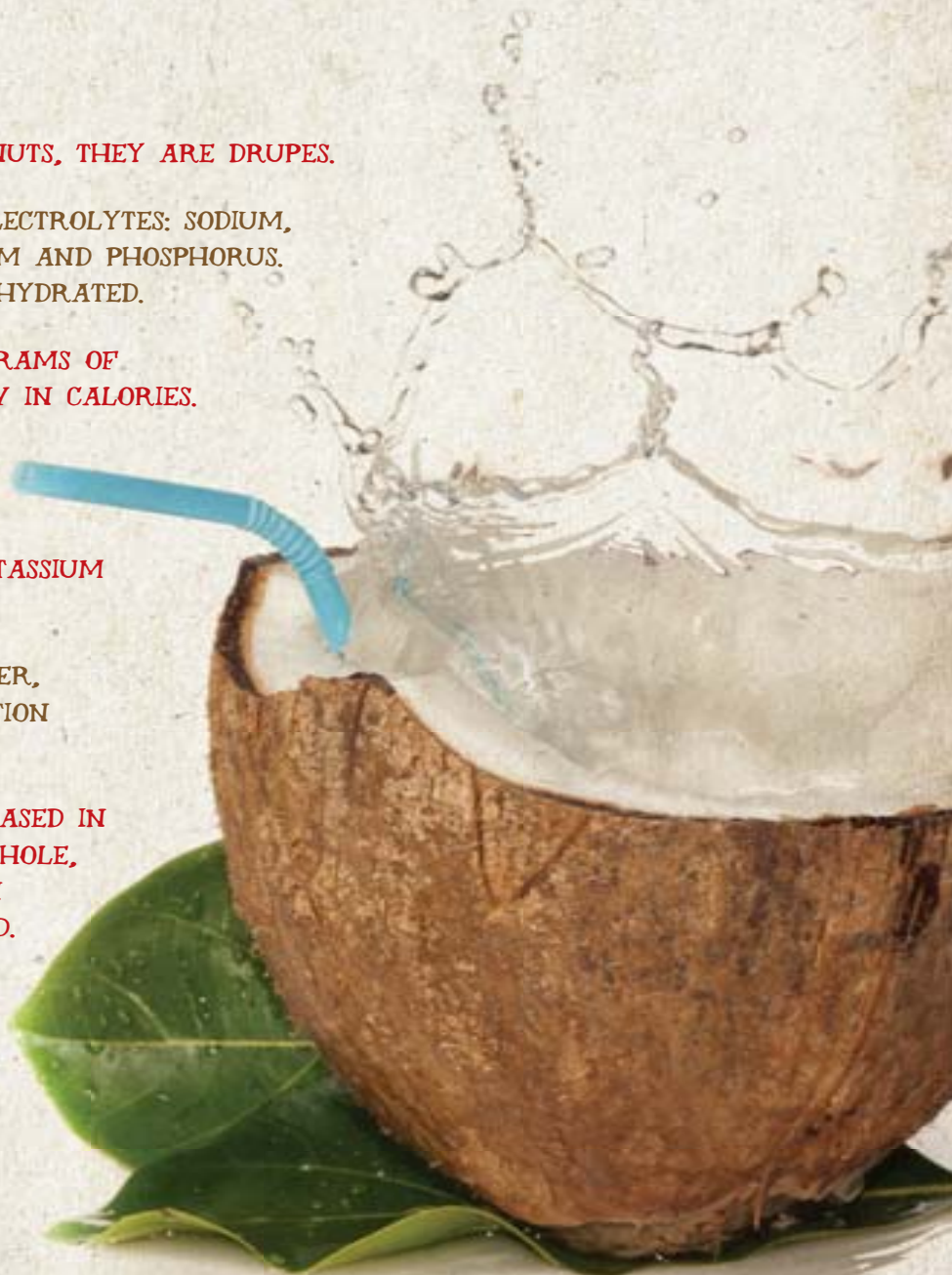
GOCONUT WATER IS FAT AND CHOLESTEROL FREE.

GOCONUT WATER HAS MORE POTASSIUM PER SERVING THAN 4 BANANAS.

GOCONUT WATER IS HIGH IN FIBER, WHICH HELPS PREVENT INDIGESTION AND REDUCES ACID REFLUX.

GOCONUT WATER CAN BE PURCHASED IN CONTAINERS, OR AS A FRESH, WHOLE, YOUNG COCONUT, WHICH IS THEN DRILLED AND A STRAW INSERTED.

PACKAGED COCONUT WATER REQUIRES A HECHSHER, BECAUSE MANY VARIETIES HAVE ADDED FLAVOR.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MASHGIACH

BY RABBI BENZION CHANOWITZ

NOTE: For many, the inner workings of kosher supervision are a curious riddle. This article attempts to offer a behind the scenes glimpse into some scenarios common in kosher supervision.

The idea for this article was born when I noticed how eager people were to learn any details of the process of *hashgocha*. Usually when I return from a kashrus trip, I share with my congregants in Monticello, New York a (non-confidential) *halachic* issue that I came across during my visit. These classes have been exciting, and people have gotten very much involved in these discussions.

As you may know, there are many companies that produce products under various names. Often a larger company that specializes in certain productions will capitalize on their expertise not only by marketing **their** product, but also by producing for other labels.

This is especially helpful for the kosher consumer. Years ago, most kosher products were produced in small facilities that could only afford less sophisticated equipment. Today, a lot of kosher food is made in larger, sophisticated plants that may produce non-kosher products too, yet they allow certain runs to be dedicated to kosher production. Even though the production was contracted out to another company, the product label will bear the kosher company's name, because the product was manufactured specifically

for them. This process is called producing under private label. Of course, the private label process comes with its challenges, as we often need to *kasher* the plant each time we use it, as well as supervise each kosher run.

For a number of years, I have been serving as a *mashgiach* at an Ⓢ Kosher certified company called Private Label Foods of Rochester in Rochester, New York. This company specializes in producing many private labels (in addition to their own in house "Savory Collection" brand), hence the name.

The plant is located in the northwestern corner of Rochester, New York, above the airport and below the city of Greece. Rochester is about a 4 hour scenic drive from my house, featuring the beauty of the foothills of the Catskill Mountains, as well as the center ridges of New York State.

Private Label Food's plant is housed in a deceptively simple looking building, with a small street side presence masking the whole back of the building. The plant itself is a bustling, busy building. There are three processing lines, two of which produce about three cases every 10-12 seconds! They produce various pasta sauces, fancy ketchups, all kinds of salad dressings and even lemon juice.

The plant is owned by Mrs. Bonnie Lavorato, and run by her son Frank. The management team consists of a variety of young, energetic, and bold people. The staff is very much focused on producing quality products, and is very careful not to ignore any issue that may adversely affect the finished product. It is really a pleasure working with them on kosher products, as they share our passion for high standards. I work very closely with many of the skilled managers on the team, who try their hardest to make the kosher production smooth.

I usually arrive at the plant on Sunday afternoon to ensure that the equipment has not been used for 24 hours (*eino ben yoma*) so that it can be kashered via *hagolah* (boiling water). It is much easier to achieve this downtime over the course of a weekend. When I arrive, the first thing I do is check the water/steam system to ensure that the pH level or the quality of water is considered halachically inedible, so that any non-kosher “*taam*” (taste) will not be transmitted through the water. After this is done, I check the pots. Though the company is very clean, and adheres fastidiously to CIP (Clean In Place standards and procedures), we have to ensure kosher standards of cleanliness. It’s rare to find a serious problem in cleanliness, yet we do search all the nooks and crannies, and at times come up with additional suggestions.

Afterwards, each tank is filled to capacity with 500 or 1,000 gallons of water, depending on the tank. They all are heated until they reach 212 degrees (a process which can take at least an hour). The tanks boil for a few minutes and are then emptied and rinsed with cold water. A lot of water and heat is used for this process. Afterwards, all of the pipes, hoses, connectors and filling lines must be kashered, as well as any utensils that were not sealed after the previous kosher production.

Next, we need to go through all the ingredients to be used in the kosher production. If all of the ingredients had an acceptable kosher seal directly on the package, it would be great. Often there are a number of ingredients that we need to verify by comparing production codes, or by following the instructions and restrictions on the accompanying kosher letters. The supervising agency always gives us a list of vetted and approved ingredients that the company requested; however, during production Murphy’s Law

often prevails - “Whatever could go wrong, will go wrong.” Therefore, there are times when we spend hours trying to track down kashrus agencies and their mashgichim to verify the kosher status of ingredients. In one instance I remember making call after call, trying to reach a rabbi who supervised a kosher run in China. We had received seven pallets (about 500 cases) of this ingredient. All of the pallets had the same lot number, yet nine cases were missing the kosher symbol. Strategically (?), all nine were found in the center of the pallets. Some places are known to be notorious for mix-ups and forgeries, and we were extra careful with this ingredient. As it turns out, we were able to reach the mashgiach, who told us to refuse these cases, which we of course did.

After reviewing all ingredients to ensure they are kosher and approved for use in the upcoming production, the workers weigh out the various ingredients and prepare the proper recipe for cooking in each pot. This pro-





No! We are not yet finished. If we are supervising a plant that is dedicated to kosher production, it is relatively simple. In such a case, we have to monitor all of the incoming ingredients, as well as spot check their warehouse; we have to constantly review the labels to ensure ingredient and kosher symbol accuracy; we have to ensure that no non-kosher equipment is purchased, and if it is, that it is kashered before being used; and of course, there has to be a good contract in place between the company and kosher certifying agency. (Of course this is only if there aren't any complex issues in their production, as in meats, fish, wine, vegetables, *Bishul, Pas, Cholov Yisroel*, etc.) But in a plant that produces kosher and non-kosher, who will ensure that no ingredients or utensils were substituted, or that no non-kosher items were labeled as kosher, G-d forbid? Who takes this responsibility if there is no mashgiach present?

At the , we take this responsibility very seriously! It is well known within the kashrus industry that the more one understands the company, the better the kosher supervision will be. When a mashgiach spends quality time watching procedures and learns the process from experienced employees, he will be able to sense where the potential problem areas are, and not only solve them much more efficiently, but more importantly, put measures into place that will help avoid issues in

the first place. The instructions that I received from Rabbi Yitzchak Hanoka, the  Kosher Rabbinical Coordinator in charge of this company, was that I should be there during the whole production, until the last kosher label is affixed. As you surely realize, a kosher label is one of the most critical parts of the supervision process, because if a label is misused, it could bring terrible consequences. If we were worried that a company would intentionally misuse a label, we would not consider them for certification, but without careful supervision and proper systems in place, a pareve label could end up on a dairy product or a kosher label may end up on a non-kosher product. It's a mashgiach's job to ensure that no mistakes happen.

cess is called batching. This can be a critical time, since any mix up that could happen with the ingredients would happen now. At this point, we must be vigilant to ensure that nothing enters this area, or into the batches, unless it is approved. Furthermore, although the ingredients are cold, we insist that only kosher utensils be used, because even though all of their utensils are clean, some ingredients are sharp and require kosher utensils. It is also very difficult to distinguish which ingredients are kosher sensitive, and which are not. This is magnified by the fact that there are all kinds of people working on the products. The best way to ensure that kashrus is not compromised, is by making simple, clear, and consistent rules that are easy for the employees to understand and follow, and by being available to answer any questions as they come up at all stages of production.

After all of this is done, can we rest assured that the product will be kosher? After all, we know that the ingredients, as well as the utensils and equipment are kosher.

There are some who question why it is so important to check the production so many times and why it is not enough for the mashgiach to make less frequent spot checks. The supervision requirements in this case were determined by Rabbi Hanoka after his personal, thorough inspection of the plant and a clear understanding of the

production process, both essential components of a high level of kosher supervision.

There are multiple pieces of each utensil in a plant, and even multiple lines with the same machines. After the utensils and equipment for the kosher production are kashered and segregated, there are still similar looking items that are not kosher. There is always a possibility of a mix-up in the absence of constant supervision. In addition, there are many employees and, while they are trained in kosher protocol, it is not always second nature to remember to keep utensils and rework separate. The job of the mashgiach is to educate and remind the workers to ensure that the kosher quality is not compromised.

I used the word “educate” intentionally. When a mashgiach answers questions and communicates the aims of the kosher program clearly, the workers want to help uphold the kosher status much more. When employees are just told what to do, but it does not make any sense to them, they will have a hard time fulfilling the objective. If you want them to buy in to the process, they need to have a clear understanding of the objective, as well as to appreciate its seriousness. The presence of the mashgiach and his demeanor, go a long way in accomplishing this.

I recently discussed this with a colleague who served as a mashgiach in a similar plant. In that plant they kashered and checked the ingredients before the production, but spot checked only sporadically. He was working for a reputable kosher agency, one which I would generally trust. My colleague argued that even if they do use a non-kosher thermometer or a utensil, it would not make the product non-kosher, since the volume of the product is 500-1,000 gallons. The minute contamination would easily be “*Botul B'Shishim*” (nullified as less than 1/60th non-kosher to kosher). Furthermore, it's a rare case when there is a mix up, and he questioned why Rabbi Hanoka would require full time supervision since this raises the cost of certification for the company.

To this I answered, “Because we represent the consumer, and this is exactly what the consumer expects when he sees the © kosher symbol!” My colleague is right that the product would probably still remain kosher. Yet how many of us would allow that possibility to exist in our own homes? How many of us would want to buy a product where a mistake was made, yet it was “*Botul B'Shishim*”? I, for one, would not want to buy it! How many of us would use a non-kosher utensil in our own kitchen for dry, cold ingredients? I suspect that an overwhelming majority of our readers would not! So, why should we not ensure that the consumers can achieve these same standards with the manufactured goods we supervise?

Today's kosher consumer demands a high standard of kosher. Rabbi Hanoka and the © have set this standard, and Private Label Foods is upholding it! Knowing the Lavorato family, as well as the staff at Private Label foods, they would not have it any other way. They are meticulous in providing an

A few words from Bonnie Lavorato, President and CEO of Private Label Foods, Inc.

I look forward to the days that Rabbi Chanowitz works in my food manufacturing facility. I love the fact that he interacts with my employees, teaching them all about what it means to be kosher. All of the information he passes along to them, whether he is explaining the spiritual side of kosher or the food safety aspect, it is all valuable and educational. Every time I see him he shares something new regarding the world of kosher. Personally, I look on labels to see if there is a kosher mark and those are the products I prefer to buy. It gives me satisfaction knowing a rabbi is watching over the process, making sure everything is clean and up to impeccable standards. I encourage my customers to pursue kosher status and let them know that their products could be kosher, if they are interested. Private Label Foods can take a recipe and turn it into a kosher product! We might have to use different ingredients, but in the end it will taste just as good or better. I recently developed a Caesar salad dressing, minus the cheese, that tastes absolutely delicious! I encourage other food manufacturers to add the ability to run kosher products in their facilities. It will be a pleasurable experience.

honestly good product without compromises, and kosher status is an integral part of their quality control standards. Their four-person Quality Control team walks around and checks every detail of the production several times per hour in addition to instructing the other employees on how to maintain the best quality product. They check the dates, the codes, the caps and so many other details of production each time they make their rounds. Even when it is an automated system, even if they do not find problems most of the time, the company values these checks. An ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure and it goes without saying, that to us, kashrus is even more important than quality control. This is why using a full time mashgiach is very valuable!

As we say in the *tefillah* before learning, “*sheloi ta'ara d'var takala al yadee..v'loi oimer al tamei tahor...*” May the Almighty ensure that no error will occur during my watch and may I not mistakenly misrepresent non-kosher as kosher! ©



Fish Gelatin

By Rabbi Yoni Rappaport

If you have eaten gummy bears, yogurt, marshmallows, popped some pills, used film photography (remember that?), had a vaccination, have worked in forensic ballistics or you're a synchronized swimmer then you have definitely come across gelatin (or its alternatives).

Gelatin is a substance derived from collagen, which is a natural protein mostly present in skin, bone and connective tissues. It is capable of forming strong gels and flexible films that are tasteless, transparent, soluble in hot water, and easily digested. Its various applications as a stabilizer and gelling and thickening agent make it a hot commodity in a range of industries, including the food industry.

Gelatin production has been around prior to its first patent in the UK in 1754. Almost half of the world production of gelatin is from porcine hide (pig), while the

rest is mainly from bovine hide (cow) and bones from cattle. Its kosher status has been debated by halachic authorities for the past couple of centuries. Although the , and most other kosher agencies, require gelatin to have a reliable kosher certification, there is a minority that will consider it kosher and pareve even from non-kosher sources.

The halachic rule regarding an accidental mixture of kosher and non-kosher substances is that if the non-kosher substance cannot influence the mixture it will be nullified and the mixture keeps its kosher status. This is the basis for *Botul B'shishim*, nullification by the ratio of one sixtieth. Our Sages determined that a food's flavor cannot be tasted in a ratio of one to sixty. Therefore non-kosher food that is less than a sixtieth of a mixture cannot cause the mixture to be non-kosher because it has no influence. (This does not apply to foods that can be tasted in minute quantities like spices.)

However, there are circumstances where it could influ-

ence the mixture in ways other than taste, and in those situations the ratio of one sixtieth does not apply. One example is if it helps solidify the mixture, referred to as *Davar Hama'amid*. If the forbidden substance solidifies the mixture then it can influence at a smaller ratio than one sixtieth; therefore, even a minute quantity can't be nullified and would render the mixture non-kosher.

An example of a *Davar Hama'amid* is using rennet to create cheese. Rennet is a complex of enzymes that coagulates milk to turn it into cheese. A source of rennet is from the abomasum (the fourth stomach chamber) of a calf. If rennet from a non-kosher source is used to coagulate kosher milk then the whole mixture would become non-kosher (see *Shulchan Oruch Yoreh De'ah* 87:11).

As explained earlier, gelatin is used as a stabilizer and thickening agent and is therefore considered a *Davar Hama'amid*. In that case, gelatin cannot become nullified to the mixture. To understand why some thought to permit non-kosher gelatin, we need to delve into the process of making gelatin.

Gelatin is produced by treating the skin or bones with acid or alkaline (depending on the raw material) to facilitate the release of collagen. Afterward, the skin or bones are dried for preservation if necessary. Then, they sit in hot water at a minimum of temperature of 45°C/113°F to extract the gelatin, which can be done multiple times. Next, the gelatin is strained to remove any traces of fat, and concentrated to remove any water. The gelatin is dried and usually ground into a powder or formed into small thin leaves.

The main reason why some earlier halachic authorities permitted non-kosher gelatin was because the bones or skin were completely dried for preservation, and were not considered food because they were inedible (Achiezer, vol. 3, 33:5). This is based on the Rema's ruling (*Yoreh De'ah* 87:10) regarding rennet, which says that if the skin of the calf's stomach was completely dry then it was permissible to use it as rennet. This is because dried skin is inedible and considered like a piece of wood (there is a dispute if this applies to non-kosher meat, see *Pischei Tshuva* 21). Similarly we find with regards to bones from a non-kosher animal that are mixed with a kosher mix-

Some earlier halachic authorities permitted non-kosher gelatin because the bones or skin were completely dried for preservation, and were not considered food.

ture, that it will not render the mixture non-kosher if they are "bone" dry (*Yoreh De'ah* 99:1).

There is an additional reason why some authorities permit gelatin. Since it originally was part of the bone or skin and now has been extracted and dried, it can be considered a new creation (*Yabia Omer, Yoreh De'ah* 8:11). This is disputed even by lenient opinions because they claim that gelatin has always been there, and now is simply separated from the bone or skin (Rabbi Yechezkel Abramski in the introduction to *Tzitz Eliezer* Vol. 4).

There are opinions that disregard the above reasons for leniency and forbid gelatin from a non-kosher source. They hold that even though at one point it may not be edible it will eventually become fit for consumption. Since it returns to a food state it will take on the previous non-kosher status at that point (*Igros Moshe, Yoreh De'ah* 2:23 & 27, *Minchas Yitzchok* 5:5).

As mentioned above the Ⓢ and most kosher agencies take the stricter approach and forbid gelatin from a non-kosher source. An important reason for this is because the lenient opinion is based on the fact that the skin and bones are dried. This process is only for preservation purposes and not integral for producing gelatin. Since there are many applications of gelatin even beyond the food industry, the market for gelatin is massive. Therefore, there isn't a need to preserve the bones or hide because an immense volume of gelatin is constantly needed, and the leniency of dried gelatin is not applicable.

There is kosher certified bovine gelatin from cows that have been halachically slaughtered. It is considered to be pareve since it is dried and tasteless and therefore comparable to the dried skin from the calf's stomach that could be used as rennet (see above). In addition to the expense of kosher supervision, kosher bovine gelatin is more expensive because the hide is bought from the slaughter house, unlike the non-kosher version which is bought from scraps from leather factories which is far less expensive.

The most common kosher gelatin which is used is ma-

rine gelatin (fish), as the skins and scales of fish contain relatively large amounts of collagen. This is easier from a kosher perspective since fish do not have to be halachically slaughtered. However, kosher fish is not the only source for marine gelatin and the skins of non-kosher fish are also used (e.g. catfish and shark), which is why a kosher certification is necessary for marine gelatin. In addition to the kashrus advantages, marine gelatin is also beneficial as fish skins and scales do not have much use and usually go to waste, unlike cow hide which can become leather.

About 1% of the world gelatin production is from marine gelatin. Gelatin can be produced from both cold-water (e.g. cod and salmon) and warm-water (e.g. tuna and tilapia) fish, though there are differences in their production. Cold-water gelatin tends to have a low bloom and warm-water commonly has a high bloom (bloom refers to the strength of the gelatin, high being strong and low being weak). Warm-water skins are less available in comparison to cold-water fish skins.

The industry does have some challenges as production is a delicate process and the quantity of available raw material is a lot smaller compared to bovine gelatin. Due to continuing research, some of the production difficulties have been overcome, including removing the odor, which initially was difficult. The method has improved so much that now marine gelatin has a less noticeable odor than bovine gelatin.

Kosher consumers purchase many different products containing fish gelatin, and while most are medicines or supplements, the consumer should take note that most kosher marshmallows are made with fish gelatin. It is especially important to be aware of this when roasting marshmallows or serving marshmallow desserts with meat meals.■



Glycerin

Rabbi Sholom Ber Hendel

What is Glycerin?

Glycerin (or glycerol) is a clear, odorless liquid with a thick consistency and sweet taste. It is a common ingredient in many food and pharmaceutical products for moisture, thickness and sweetness (unlike sugar, it does not cause dental cavities).

The name glycerol is derived from the Greek word for sweet - glykys, and the names glycerin, glycerine, and glycerol are used interchangeably.

How is Glycerin made?

Vegetable oils and animal fats both have the same chemical makeup with triglycerides as the main component. The name describes the make-up: the backbone glycerin, which has three (tri) chains of fatty acids that are attached to the glycerin. To isolate the glycerin, it must be split from the fatty acids. This can be done by using one of two methods: hydrolysis or transesterification.

Hydrolysis separates the fatty acid from the glycerin by heating oil or fat to a high temperature under a vacuum. The fatty acids float to the top of the tank and the glycerin water ("sweet water") sinks to the bottom. The impurities are removed from the glycerin water, the water is evaporated off, and the glycerin is then distilled and purified.

In recent years, glycerin has begun to be produced from another source - biodiesel production. Biodiesel is a renewable, clean-burning diesel replacement made from vegetable oil, waste cooking oil or animal fat,

which is reducing dependence on petroleum and improving the environment. It is produced in many counties and all over the USA (currently there are 200 biodiesel plants across the USA). Glycerin from biodiesel production is produced by transesterification, which separates the fatty acid from the glycerin by reacting the oil or fat with methanol and a catalyst (a chemical used to speed up chemical reaction). The fatty acids become biodiesel and the glycerin is distilled and purified. Biodiesel is only economically viable when oil/fat prices are low and/or when there is government subsidy.

Glycerin can also be made synthetically by processing propane (a byproduct of petroleum processing). Propane can be treated with chemicals in a multi-step process to make synthetic glycerin. The glycerin is then distilled and purified and is mainly used in pharmaceuticals.

Is glycerin kosher?

Glycerin is kosher if it is made from kosher vegetable oil or petroleum and processed on kosher equipment. A lot of glycerin is made from animal fat, processed on the same equipment as animal glycerin or made from used oil from non-kosher establishments, rendering the glycerin non-kosher. Glycerin is not "pogum" and usually it is not "botul b'shishim". Glycerin or any product containing glycerin can only be used with acceptable kosher certification.



TOMATO SOUP WITH TOASTED RED QUINOA

By: Chef Yosef Schwartz - Joy of Kosher Magazine. [Subscribe at www.joyofkosher.com/subscribe](http://www.joyofkosher.com/subscribe)

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 teaspoon olive oil | 4 sprigs fresh thyme |
| 2 medium carrots, peeled and chopped | 3 sprigs fresh oregano |
| 2 stalks celery, chopped | 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil |
| 1 onion, chopped | 3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley |
| 6 Roma tomatoes, chopped | 1 cup dry white wine |
| 1 garlic clove, smashed | 3 cups chicken or vegetable stock |
| 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt | 1/2 cup red quinoa, rinsed and drained |
| 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper | |

DIRECTIONS

For the soup:

- 1.** Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat.
- 2.** Add the onion, carrots, celery and salt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables begin to soften.
- 3.** Add the tomatoes, garlic, cayenne pepper, thyme and oregano, and cook about 5 minutes.
- 4.** Add the basil, parsley, wine, broth and 1 cup water, and bring

to a boil.

- 5.** Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 50 minutes.
- 6.** Remove the herb sprigs.
- 7.** Using a hand blender, puree the soup until smooth.

For the quinoa:

- 8.** In a medium saucepan, combine the quinoa with 1 cup of water and 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt and bring to a boil.
- 9.** Cover and cook over low heat until the quinoa is tender and all

of the water has been absorbed, about 25 minutes.

- 10.** Spread the quinoa out on a baking sheet to cool.
- 11.** In a small skillet, toast the quinoa over low heat, stirring frequently, until it's crunchy and starts to pop, about 5 minutes.
- 12.** Ladle the soup into bowls, spread the toasted quinoa over the top, garnish with chopped fresh basil.



KEEPING KOSHER IN

BY LEIGH HERSHKOVICH

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, deep in the heart of Fez, a touring couple set out to see the sights of the ancient city. While wandering through and taking in the beauty of the city, they came across an interesting looking building.

As they stood outside and admired it, an elderly man came out of the building, inviting them inside to take a closer look. As soon as they stepped inside, the man, whose command of English was poor, handed them several papers, written in Arabic and French, all of which were about Chabad and the Seven Noahide Laws. Through hand gestures and the limited communication they had, they understood from the man that the building they were in, called the Water Clock Tower, had once been the home of a Jewish rabbi. It had once been called the The

House of the Magician. Upon returning to America and further research, they discovered that the home they had stood in had once belonged to the Rambam. Morocco, a country of great beauty and rich history, has long been the home of many Jewish communities. Throughout the generations, through good times and bad, there has always been a standing Jewish community somewhere in the country. Though some of the communities are long gone, the facts—like the Rambam's house—remain. And where there is a Jewish community, there is bound to be a cuisine to nurture the soul and the spirit as well.

The Jewish community of Meknes was once a thriving one. In its glory days, it had everything a flourishing community would need; the homes of almost every rabbi



and leader had a shul and a mikvah in the compound, and kosher food was in abundance. That is not to say that the people of that community had the luxuries that one would find in an American supermarket, but they were never hungry either. “We lived on a very simple diet,” a woman who once lived in the Meknes community recalled. “We ate a lot of vegetables and meat products. We hardly ate dairy, and there were almost no processed options. I didn’t know what margarine was until we moved to France!”

Meknes, home of the very first Chabad *shliach*, Rabbi Michal Lipsker, who moved to there in the 1950s, had a very strict level of *kashrus*. The community had a kosher bakery, and a mill that made special batches of flour for Pesach, as well as a *shochet* who worked to keep the Jewish

community fed year round.

The aforementioned expat recalled, “I remember one year on Erev Pesach, I went with my father to the *shochet* to pick out a lamb. My father wanted one specific one, but the *shochet* refused to give it to him, claiming that there were better to choose from. He always looked out to make sure that we received the best he had to offer. As it turned out, the one he pushed my father away from purchasing had a *mum* (blemish) in his head, which rendered it non-kosher. How he knew, I don’t know! Hashem put it in his head!”

Leaving Morocco at the age of nineteen was difficult for her and her family; Morocco had always been their home and starting over in France was strange. She spoke kindly of the community in Morocco, and of the safety the Jews had





Through an expulsion, and sometime dangerous living conditions, the Jewish community is still thriving in Morocco.

in Meknes. These days, as a chef who caters to many venues throughout Southern California, she has more than a handful of choices when it comes to what she serves, yet she still speaks of her early childhood in Morocco with a glimmer of nostalgia, as if the simpler days are preferred.

Rochel, a young woman who was born in Casablanca, recalled how everyone, regardless of religious affiliation, had a sense of Jewish pride. “Even the most non-observant Jews in our communities lit Shabbat candles and used the mikvah. And kosher food was easily accessible where we lived, so that wasn’t a problem either. There was no reason for anyone not to keep kosher, because it was at our fingertips.”

Casablanca, which is home to one of the largest Muslim communities in the world, still feels like home to Rochel after all of these years. “There was something very warm and tight knit about our community; it’s not something that can easily be reproduced.” Families often gathered in each other’s home for Shabbos meals, sharing and delighting in each other’s delicious cuisine. “We definitely did not have the amount of options that you’d find in the US or Canada today, but we were very lucky. There was a bakery that sold fresh baked goods every day, we had access to kosher meat all year round; it was easy to keep kosher there. Our grandparents used to send us specialty items from Canada, and we’d share them with all of our friends. It was like a different world. We didn’t want for anything.”

Today, Casablanca is bursting with Jewish life, with over 4,000 Jews in the city alone. For forty years, the community was led by Rabbi Leibel and Mrs. Reizel Raskin, who came to Casablanca in the 1960s at the behest of

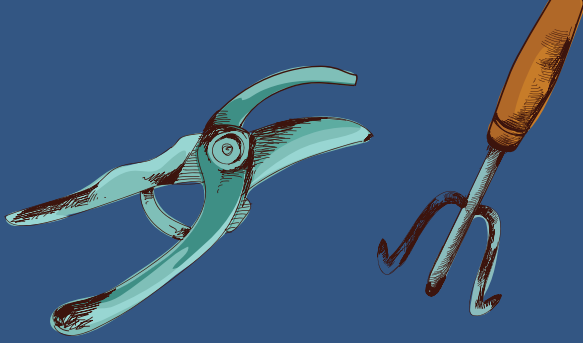
the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Although Rabbi Raskin passed away in 2004, Mrs. Raskin has remained in Morocco to continue guiding the community she has shepherded for generations. Rabbi Levi Banon, who has been on *shlichus* in Casablanca for seven years, shared his take thoughts on the thriving Jewish life in Morocco. “We are based in Casablanca, but we are involved in other cities as well. Everything is tied

together here. We have a selection of restaurants in the town square, both meat and dairy, as well as kosher products that are sold in local grocery stores. We have many of the items that you’d find in kosher stores around the world, but we’re definitely not up to par with New York’s options....yet.”

Specialty items such as fine cheese or cookies, are often imported from the United States or France, while the other, easy to make items, such as milk and butter, are made locally. A commercial kitchen in Rabbi Banon’s Chabad House is used to prepare for special occasions and holidays; the Chabad House accommodates several hundred people for every Yom Tov. Local chefs and volunteers are hired to help prepare the large scale meals.

Through an expulsion, and sometime dangerous living conditions, the Jewish community is still thriving in Morocco. “Tourists are shocked when they see how much of a Jewish presence there is here,” a community member from Casablanca explained. “They expect to see us riding on donkeys and shying away from celebrating who we are, and yet, when they arrive, they’re greeted with a host of kosher restaurants and eateries.” Rabbi Banon is currently at work on preparing a complete directory for Jewish life in Morocco, which he hopes will make it easier for tourists to maneuver their way around the vast country.

“My recommendation for any tourist,” Rabbi Banon concluded, “is to come prepared to see beautiful sites. Morocco is a wonderful country, with incredible things to see.” As the tourists who came across the Rambam’s home in Fez would say, you never know what’s around the corner. 📍



CHALLENGES ^{OF} THE EIGHTH YEAR

BY MAAVAN MEIR

Ⓚ ISRAEL STARTS PREPARING FOR SHMITTA DURING THE SIXTH YEAR OF THE CYCLE. NOW, IN THE EIGHTH YEAR, THERE IS STILL IMPORTANT WORK TO DO.

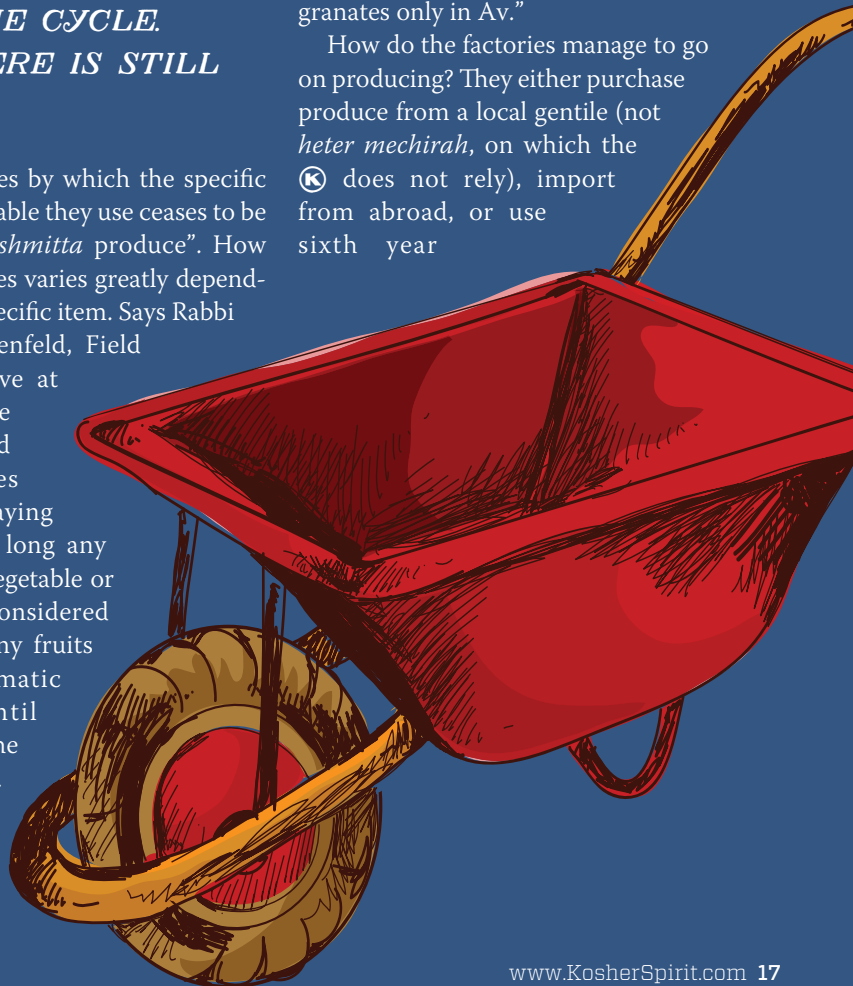
The *shmitta* year is over, but the extra *kashrus* preoccupation surrounding *shmitta* produce are still very much a concern at the Ⓚ. “We start working on *shmitta* kosher matters in the sixth year and in the eighth year we are still working on them,” says Rabbi Aharon Haskel, head of Ⓚ Israel, who adds, “It doesn’t even end then. In the eighth year, *shmitta* has special relevance to industries such as fruit concentrates, orange peels, etc. But even after that, we still have issues with preserves and legumes, which have a very long shelf life.” The *halachos* of *shmitta* are relevant to food production in Eretz Yisroel almost every year!

Since manufacturers of products which contain fruits or vegetables as ingredients need to go on producing, they have to find approved alternatives

until the dates by which the specific fruit or vegetable they use ceases to be considered “*shmitta* produce”. How long that takes varies greatly depending on the specific item. Says Rabbi Yitzhak Rosenfeld, Field Representative at Ⓚ Israel: “We have provided all factories with lists saying exactly how long any fruit, herb, vegetable or legume is considered *shmitta*. Many fruits are problematic almost until the end of the eighth year. Oranges are allowed only in

Tammuz, for example, and pomegranates only in Av.”

How do the factories manage to go on producing? They either purchase produce from a local gentile (not *heter mechirah*, on which the Ⓚ does not rely), import from abroad, or use sixth year



produce. “Before *shmitta* started, our mashgichim entered all storage rooms where sixth year fruits were stored, counted them and locked the door,” explains Rabbi Rosenfeld. “The mashgiach is the only one to have the key, to ensure nobody is adding *shmitta* fruits to the stock. We will go on inspecting the storage rooms during *shmitta* as well, until the restriction of *shmitta* produce ends”.



Often, the  has to help the manufacturers find suppliers for missing ingredients. “Usually there are severe limits on importing produce, since the government wants to help local farmers,” says Rabbi Haskel. “However, when it comes to *shmitta* we are allowed to import many more things. And indeed we helped clients get herbs and garlic from as far away as China. Others also had to import avocado and ginger.”

Wineries have unique problems of their own explains Rabbi Rosenfeld: “We did not certify many wines from the 2015 harvest since many wineries used *heter mechira* grapes (which the  does not accept). Only two wineries got certification for the 2015 wines since they purchased grapes from gentiles.” The fact that wineries produced uncertified wines bear ramifications for 2016. “When they want to use the barrels again, we have to kasher all of them. It’s a *chumra* we adhere to strongly.”

Another special case is *esrogim*. Rabbi Rosenfeld explains: “*Esrogim* fall in two categories of *shmitta* produce: if they have *hanata* – the stage

when the fruit begins to appear – during *shmitta*, then it is a *shmitta* fruit. But even if the fruit appeared during the sixth year, if the *esrog* was picked during the *shmitta* year, then it is a *shmitta* fruit, too.” See kosher spirit (<http://www.kosherspirit.com/Article.asp?Issue=34&Article=171>)¹

What are the ramifications of this? “All *esrogim* this year are *otzar beis din* [the *beis din* pays the farmer a flat wage to grow his produce for the public]”, says Rabbi Haskel. “That means, among other things, that no *esrogim* can be exported since it is forbidden to take holy *shmitta* produce out of Eretz Yisrael.”

As it says in the Torah, G-d’s blessing upon those who observe *shmitta* extends from the sixth year to the eighth year. May all who undertake the great challenge of observing *shmitta* at the highest level, from the farmers, to the factories, to the kosher consumers, be continued to be blessed in great abundance, materially and spiritually. 

1. See article in Kosher Spirit (<http://www.kosherspirit.com/Article.asp?Issue=34&Article=171>)

HETER MECHIRA

Some Rabbonim feel that if we conditionally sell the entire land of Israel to non-Jews it would circumvent many of the restrictions of *shmitta*. (This is, in fact, the policy of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.) However, many prominent Rabbonim reject this approach for a variety of reasons. The prevalent opinion is not to rely on this approach and even the Chief Rabbinate of Israel considers it acceptable only because of great need, and not the ideal approach.

OTZAR BEIS DIN

The produce of *shmitta* must be treated as “ownerless” and permitted for anyone to take. It is, however, permitted for a public entity, acting in the public interest, to hire workers to harvest the fields and make the fruit available to the public. The public entity may collect a fee to recoup their costs. This is the most common method used today to obtain an *esrog* in a *shmitta* year. Obviously consumers should look for the certification that their *esrog* is being “sold” through an *Otzar Beis Din*. Typically an *Otzar Beis Din* set-up will result in *esrogim* sold for a [relatively] fixed price and for less than in a typical year.



Miracles in Nepal

Maayan Meir

RABBI SHARON GALSURKAR, the  field representative in India, was planning a family vacation in Nepal. What he wasn't planning on was experiencing miracles in rapid succession.

The Galsurkar family decided to go on a vacation earlier than usual so that the children would not miss out on the Chabad camp. They reached Nepal on Monday and until Thursday the trip was enjoyable and uneventful.

On Thursday, they came to the mountainous area near Kathmandu. "Before setting out I had booked a hotel on a high mountain, which had rooms with very special panoramic view," explains Rabbi Galsurkar. "However, when we reached the hotel we were told they were fully booked and directed to another hotel. Of course, we were very disappointed, but my wife kept saying that everything was for the best."

On Shabbos morning, the family finished eating early and decided to go on a walk – to the hotel where they originally planned to stay to check out the special view.

"We reached the hotel and started climbing the stairs – when we reached the second floor the entire building started to shake like a person suffering from extreme cold. I'd never felt such a thing before. Things went flying everywhere, chandeliers fell down and shattered. The stairs collapsed – we jumped over the ruins to reach the hotel entrance and leave. My wife was saying the *Shema*."

The scared family ran back to their own hotel, which fortunately wasn't damaged by the earthquake. Later they discovered that the people who had stayed in the rooms they wanted were seriously injured or trapped in their rooms.

After Shabbos, the family looked for a way to travel to

Kathmandu, where their flight was scheduled to leave on Monday. It was nearly impossible to find transportation, but the hotel owner was traveling near Kathmandu because his mother had died and he agreed to take us with him. "We thought we would have to walk for the rest of the way but miraculously, the moment we left his car, a taxi stopped and took us to Kathmandu."

The Indian air force sent planes to Kathmandu to take home Indian citizens who wished to leave Nepal. The Galsurkar family reached the airport – and found a mile-long line of Indians desperate to return to their country and leave tragedy-struck Nepal behind. The family decided to spend the night at the golf course near the airport. "I went to buy water in a nearby hotel and asked the owner to borrow some mattresses too. He agreed, but came with me to make sure that I really had a wife and three children and wasn't trying to rob him."

The following day, another huge line formed for the Indian planes. Everybody waiting there received a number. Rabbi Sharon saw that, because of the numbers they received, they hardly had any chance of leaving that day. "And then another miracle happened! I approached the person in charge to ask what was going on. He didn't even ask for my number, just told me to bring my family and wait nearby. Within a few minutes an official came, checked out passports, and told us to board the plane! Nobody asked to see our numbers!"

The family boarded the plane and flew back to India. A few hours later Rabbi Sharon's wife and children were at their home in Mumbai. And Rabbi Sharon? He was already on his way to a kosher inspection in a local facility...

MEET OUR STAFF:

WHO'S BEHIND THE ©

Interview with Rabbi Yoni Rappaport



Rabbi Yoni Rappaport

KS: Where did you grow up?

Where did you go to yeshiva?

RJR: I was born in Australia and lived in Israel from age 10 to 17. I studied in Lubavitch yeshivos in Israel, the UK and Florida, and I received *semicha* from Machon Ariel in Jerusalem and from Machon LeHora'a in South Africa.

KS: What did you do after yeshiva?

RJR: After I received *semicha*, I studied for *Yadin Yadin* and did *shimush* by Rabbi Yoram Ulman, a *dayan* in the Sydney Beth Din. I got married to Chanie Bialestock in January 2010 and continued to learn in kollel for another year and a half.

KS: What is your current position at the ©?

RJR: I am a Rabbinic Coordinator, coordinating the rabbinical aspects of an account. I determine how a facility can become kosher and create mashgiach instructions, visit each facility annually to ensure that their kosher program is being maintained, and resolve any kashrus concerns that arise.

KS: What prepared you the most for your current position at the ©?

RJR: The biggest preparation was learning for *semicha* with Rabbi Wineberg in South Africa. In addition to teach-

ing me the *halachos* that pertain to kashrus, he also opened my mind to learning with a practical application, whereas before my learning was all theoretical.

KS: What is best thing about working at the ©?

RJR: From my first day everyone has been so accommodating in helping me do my part in making this organization maintain its high kosher standards. Everyone, in all departments, will make time for me to assist me with what I need.

KS: How would you describe the © today?

RJR: The © is a very efficient team. Each person in every department is an integral part of this organization. Everyone's contribution facilitates the maintenance of high kashrus standards with outstanding customer service.

KS: Can you share an interesting experience that you had while working at the ©?

RJR: There were two different visits scheduled for the same day and I had the chance to accompany the rabbi on either one. I really wanted to go to both, but I had to pick one, so after much deliberation I picked the beverage facility.

On one of the bottling lines there was a non-certified beverage being filled that contained grape juice. The company used kosher grape juice for that beverage to avoid

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the downtime of koshering that line. When I went to the cooler room to inspect the ingredients, we were directed to where the drums of grape juice were kept. Sure enough, they were kosher.

We spent about 20 minutes looking at different ingredients and asking the workers to take down some drums to see the labels. We were on our way out of the cooler room and suddenly I noticed an area by the entrance that we missed, so I decided to just give it a quick peek as it was really cold in there. When I had a look, I saw that there were a few drums of grape juice that were certified but did not meet our requirements for a kosher approved ingredient. Needless to say, this matter was swiftly resolved.

Certifying products as kosher is a massive responsibility since the kosher consumer is reliant on us. I learned from this experience that as humans we will always be prone to human error, and the only way to maintain a near flawless operation is with Divine guidance. When we first saw the drums of kosher grape juice we weren't expecting to see anything else. Only with G-d's help were we directed to the right place and were able to succeed in our holy mission.

What Other People Say

Rabbi Yoni Rappaport

“ We welcome Rabbi Yoni Rappaport aboard as the latest member of our RC team. His quick perception and deep understanding have helped him quickly fit in with his more experienced peers and his youthful vigor and enthusiasm are greatly appreciated in our office.”

Rabbi Don Yoel Levy

Kashrus Administrator

“ Rabbi Yoni Rappaport is simply a pleasure and even an inspiration to work with. The “mentchlichkeit” that defines him is perhaps only overshadowed by his rapid progress in applying his book knowledge to the practical application of Kosher policies and procedures of commercial kashrus certification. He would be the first to admit that there is so much to learn, but we are truly impressed and are certain that Klal Yisroel will benefit from his exuberance and attention to detail in all things kashrus for years to come. *Hatzlocho Rabbah!*”

Rabbi Levi Marmulszteyn

Rabbinic Manager

“ Rabbi Rappaport is a young, energetic *talmid chochom*, and in the short time since he has joined the ~ he has displayed a thorough grasp of practical kashrus and its manufacturing applications. He possesses a keen mind and pleasant personality, and it's a pleasure to work alongside him. Having had the merit to help train Rabbi Rappaport, it is very impressive how quickly he identifies and grasps kashrus challenges and viable solutions in any given situation.”

Rabbi Yitzchak Hanoka

Rabbinic Coordinator

Tzom Gedaliah

Compiled by Dina Fraenkel

E

very fast day has a special energy of Divine goodwill, greater than a regular day. On each fast day, we hear the Torah reading of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy at both

the morning and afternoon services. These attributes represent the boundless kindness of Hashem. In addition, the Haftorah read on fast days enjoins us to “Seek G-d while He may be found, call Him when He is near.”¹

This Divine goodwill is especially apparent on *Tzom Gedaliah* because it occurs during the Ten Days of Repentance between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. According to the Zohar, it is during the Ten Days of Repentance when Hashem’s Thirteen Attributes of Mercy are revealed to the world.² According to some opinions, this is due to the elevated days of *teshuvah*, and according to other opinions it is due to the great unity of Jews praying together during this time, which has the power to bring Hashem closer to man.

According to the Sages, an individual’s prayer is very strong during the Ten Days of Repentance, and can have the same power as group prayer. How much more so, when an entire community prays together during the Ten Days of Repentance, the power of their prayer reaches the highest levels!³ Along these lines, the communal fasting undertaken on *Tzom Gedaliah* has an even greater influence than other fasts during the year, because it takes place during the Ten Days of Repentance, where our powers of prayer and *teshuvah* are heightened.

The great and boundless power for good that occurs during a communal fast is similar to the power of goodness that will be revealed during the Final Redemption. In fact, the Haftorah read on each fast day concludes with the prophecies that will be fulfilled during the Redemption, including, “And My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”⁴

The goodness and strength of each communal fast day will be revealed during the Redemption when all of the fast days will be nullified and transformed into holidays of celebration.⁵ *Tzom Gedaliah* commemorates Gedaliah ben Achikam, who governed the Jews after the Babylonian conquest. According to some opinions, Gedaliah was a scion of Dovid HaMelech, and the last member of the royal family to have authority over Eretz Yisroel.⁶ Gedaliah is the link between the day of Divine goodwill and Moshiach ben Dovid, who will bring us out of Golus and into the era where Divine goodwill will be revealed each and every day, *bimheira v’yameinu*.

1. Yeshayahu 55:6.

2. See Zohar II, 177a.

3. Or HaTorah, Shir HaShirim, p. 1462. This concept is alluded to in the use of the plural form of the word “seek” (uurs). This can be interpreted to mean that “while Gd is to be found,” i.e., during the Ten Days of Teshuvah, we should seek Him as a united community.

4. Yeshayahu 56:7.

5. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, the conclusion of Hilchos Taaniyos, based on Zechariah 8:19.

6. There are some indications that Gedaliah was related to the House of David, for it was a Babylonian custom to appoint relatives of the kings as governors. Even according to the authorities (Radak and Abarbanel to II Melachim 25:25), who state that Gedaliah was not related to the House of David, his murder shares a connection with that dynasty. Yishmael, the son of Nesanyah, was a descendant of the House of David. Jealous that Gedaliah and not he, had been appointed as governor, Yishmael murdered him. See Sefer HaSichos, 5751, p. 23.

The King & His Son

By Chaim Fogelman

A king sent his son far away to challenge and better himself. The trip was arduous and the challenges formidable. Sadly, the son forgot who he was and even where he came from; he no longer acted or looked like the king's son.

Suddenly, something happened that makes the prince remember. He returned to the palace and nobody recognized him. The prince cried, "Father! Father!" The father was stunned and shocked for a split second when he saw his son, but then they embraced and reunited. The king was so happy to have his son back.

The king is Hashem, the son represents the Yidden. Hashem sent us all to a faraway place, from Heaven down to earth. Some of us lose our way on earth and can forget why we were sent here. We might not act like Hashem's children and some of us change the way we look.

Suddenly, in the month of Elul we remember. On Rosh Hashanah we blow the shofar and cry out to our Father. On Yom Kippur the King judges us, but only for a moment. Sukkos is the embrace, when Hashem

hugs us and welcomes us back, as we sit in the sukkah (which is at least 2 walls, plus one small wall – the two full walls represent the shoulder to the elbow and the elbow to the wrist, while the third, small wall is the hand). The hug makes the hugged one smaller, not equal, so on Simchas Torah we hug the Torah and return Hashem's embrace.



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