

# K<sup>OSHER</sup> SPIRiT

CERTIFIED SOUL NUTRITION

בס"ד  
כסלו תשפ"ד  
KISLEV 5784



א פריילעכן חנוכה

WISHING YOU A HAPPY CHANUKAH



# KOSHER SPIRIT



*is dedicated to*

**RABBI BEREL LEVY OB"AM and RABBI DON YOEL LEVY OB"AM,**

**who set the standards of kashrus at © Kosher Certification and who  
inspire us daily to perpetuate and uphold their legacy.**

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## **CORRECTION:**

**HALACHA B'YUN** Sukkos



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## **Dear Reader,**

Once, during a flight, as the plane flew at 36,000 feet above sea level, it suddenly hit some strong turbulence. The passengers began bouncing around and they gripped their armrests as they held on for dear life and panic and fear filled their eyes and hearts.

Despite all of the commotion, one young boy just continued coloring with his crayons, completely relaxed and seemingly oblivious to the panic and fright his fellow

passengers were experiencing.

After 20 minutes or so, the flight smoothed out and the passengers breathed a sigh of relief.

An elderly man turned to the child, who was sitting next to him, and asked him, "Did you not feel that turbulence? Weren't you afraid?"

"Oh yes," answered the child, "I felt the turbulence but I was not afraid at all. You see, my father is the pilot and knows what he is doing. He would never do anything that would put me in danger."

On Simchas Torah, Klal Yisroel experienced major turbulence, but we must remember that Hashem is our Father in heaven; He knows what He is doing and He is our pilot. Hashem is in control of everything.

Instead of focusing on the evil atrocities, we must think about what we can do now, and how we can strive to rise to the top.

We need unbreakable achdus, we need to daven more, learn more Torah, give more tzedakah, and do more mitzvos. We need to strengthen our emunah, we need to beg Hashem to bring Moshiach now! We need steadfast bitachon that Hashem is much bigger than the horror and terror that we face. We need to trust that He is going to make it all better.

Yes, the pain is real. We are living in troubling times, but we must constantly remember that Hashem is in absolute control of everything, loves us dearly, and will surely make it right.

Let's try our best to keep our spirits high, do what must be done, and like the Maccabees, with Hashem's help, we will succeed. Let us all continue to make the world a kosher, and happy place filled with peace and harmony. May we merit the ultimate brocha of the Geulah Shleimah.

With best wishes for a freilichen Chanukah,

**Rabbi Chaim Fogelman**

Editor in Chief, © Executive Kashrus Vaad



# What's the Brocha? Pizza



By Rabbi Sholom  
Ber Lepkivker  
Ⓚ *Rabbinic  
Coordinator*

**P**izza – a staple in many homes on Motzei Shabbos. Comfort food, a quick supper, and it's even nutritionally balanced! What's the brocha on pizza? Does it matter when you eat it? Or how much you eat?

**Q: What brocha should I say on pizza?**

**A:** Good question! Let's start with the base. How is it made? Pizza dough made from flour and water is Halachically considered bread and the correct brocha is hamotzi.<sup>1</sup> However, if the primary liquid in the dough is juice, then there is a Halachic discussion regarding whether the pizza is hamotzi or mezonos.<sup>2</sup> The Halachic conclusion is that one may rely on the lenient opinion and make the brocha of borei minei mezonos<sup>3</sup>; however, the Alter Rebbe says that it is praiseworthy to wash, make the brocha of hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz and eat some regular bread to eliminate any doubt.

The above only applies when eating a moderate amount of pizza (usually one slice).<sup>4</sup> If one eats more than 230 cm<sup>3</sup> of pizza crust (about the volume of 8 ounces of water), and one feels full after eating it, one has to make the brocha of hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz on the pizza. If one is not usually full after eating the above amount, one should eat some regular bread in order to make the brocha of hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz. Practically speaking, unless the pizza is just a snack, it is best to eat pizza with another type of bread.



**Q: Do I have to say a separate brocha on the various toppings?**

**A:** No. The toppings are secondary to the actual pizza and they are included in the brocha on the pizza.<sup>5</sup>

**Q: If I'm eating more than one slice, which piece should I start with?**

**A:** It is best to say the brocha on the piece that is visibly larger.<sup>6</sup>

1 סב"ה פ"ב הלכה ה'

2 שם הל' ז'

3 Some Rabbonim rule that adding juice or milk to a dough that is intended to be eaten as a meal (like bread) is not enough to render it mezonos.

4 שם הל' א'

5 שם פ"ג הל' א'

6 שו"ע אדמו"ר סימן קסח סעיף ה'



# Checking Your Consumer **RASHRUS IQ**

By Rabbi Avrohom Teichman,  
Guest Contributor

A casual conversation about kashrus is usually punctuated by a lot of conflicting and general statements. It's easy to be confused; who's right? How do they know? Here are some common kashrus "sound bites". When you read these, what comes to mind? Do any of these resonate with you? Read on to see if your perceptions align with the questions I've posed.

**I don't worry about bug infestation, it's already taken care of.**  
If you are thinking of a pureed product, that's correct. Otherwise, you need (to learn how) to check yourself for bugs, or buy products already certified and checked for bugs.

**My grandmother can't understand how so many products can be kosher today.**  
That's so understandable. Much has changed and continues to. Communication, information access, the whole nine yards. Add to this that the food source is further from the consumer than ever, including farms, meatpacking plants, etc. Kashrus supervision needed to step up its game to provide reliable certification. The result, though, affords reliable hashgacha on many tens of thousands of products.

**Whoever tells me it's kosher, is kosher with me.**  
Is your source definite because of firsthand knowledge, hearsay, or general knowledge not specific to this item?

**It's kosher whenever there is any kosher mark.**

That depends on whose kosher mark it is. Is it that of a reliable certifier, agency, or rabbi, or that of the producer who declares his opinion of the product's kosher status?

**It's kosher whenever there is any kosher mark, but not just a 'K'.**

The certifier, agency, or rabbi indeed confirms the kosher status. Is it reliable? Are you in sync with its/his policy regarding this specific product?

**I use all Israeli products.**

Even Israelis don't use all Israeli products. You need to familiarize yourself with the reliability and standards for the specific certification of Israeli products.

**The words PAREVE, DAIRY, and DE mean the same for all kosher marks.**

Yes and no. Pareve means no meat and no dairy; Dairy means the product has dairy ingredients. Some certifiers use Dairy even when there are no dairy ingredients, but the production equipment is also used for dairy or the producer wants the flexibility of substituting dairy-certified ingredients.

**I have a personal kashrus standard in sync with a specific Rav.**

If he is knowledgeable in kashrus, that's great. Even if not, if he is willing to follow up with a kashrus authority, follow him!



**Once I know an item is kosher,  
it's always kosher by me.**

Are you sure it's still the same item? Is the kosher mark still there? (It may now be produced in the company's non-kosher facility, or because ingredients changed, it's no longer certified.) Has the kosher mark changed? (The producer may have changed certifiers.) Even if there is no kosher mark, maybe it is still kosher? (The kosher mark was omitted in error.) Check, check, and check again.

**Whatever my rabbi  
tells me is kosher, is kosher.**

That's what rabbis are for, to impart decisive information. Be careful, and make sure the rabbi understands the reason you ask about the item; he may think you are asking because of A and so responds, but you really asked because of reason B, and that question wasn't answered...

**I know what  
'FISH' means with  
the kosher mark.**

Of course, it means there is fish in the ingredients; therefore, it should not be eaten together with meat.

**My local rabbi knows  
everything there is to  
know about kashrus.**

And even if not, if he knows someone who does know, you are one lucky fellow.

**I know what 'DE'  
means with the kosher mark.**

Yes, it stands for Dairy Equipment, and what is your standard in this regard? Does there need to be koshering before production on Dairy Equipment, or not? If you keep Cholov Yisroel, are you makpid that all keilim are only used for Cholov Yisroel?

**A larger kashrus agency is more reliable.**

Often. They have greater access to technical food industry information; they have food chemists on staff or consulting services; they have poskim to help decide policy and answer questions; they have experience and expertise in many more kashrus areas; and, they have decades of valuable "corporate memory".

**Keeping kosher today is  
easier than in earlier times.**

Yes and no. There are many more thousands of kosher-certified products available today than in earlier times, but the kosher food industry is full of complexities including thousands of certifiers, and dynamic and continuous changes in food technology and production. In earlier times, very few foods were certified, food production was more basic, means of production were closer to the end consumer, and keeping kosher was much more "black and white".

As you can see, there are no one-size-fits-all answers when it comes to kashrus. The best consumer is an educated consumer and one who always verifies that products bear a reliable kosher symbol, even when they are a staple in one's household. You never lose by ensuring your home is kosher without compromise.

**Where do I go from here? I have no plans to  
stop eating, so what is the 'best practice?'**

Certain 'best practices' are recommended:

- First, awareness is your most powerful tool for keeping kosher.
- Second, find a rabbi you can rely on, who is knowledgeable or knows one who is. One rabbi, not a bunch.
- Third, work with your rabbi to arrive at your kashrus standard.
- Finally, before you eat anything, know that it is kosher to your standard.



מונח בחותמו של כהן גדול, מוכן להדלקת המנורה בבית המקדש. ולא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד. נעשה בו נס והדליקו ממנו **שמונה ימים**."

הצורך בשמונה ימים עד להבאת שמן טהור, נבע מן התהליך הטכני: מסיקת הזיתים, שינועם אל בית הבד ולבסוף דריכתם והפקה של שמן זית חדש - טהור וכשר - למנורת המקדש. ולזכר אותו הנס אנו חוגגים חנוכה **שמונה ימים**.

גם היום, הפקת שמן זית כשר כרוכה בתהליך ארוך, ובפרט בארץ ישראל בה אנו מחויבים ב"מצוות התלויות בארץ" דוגמת תרומות ומעשרות.

מרגע המסיק, על החקלאי להימצא תחת פיקוח כשרותי על הכרם. תחילה יש לוודא שעצי הזית עברו את שנות הערלה (בשלוש השנים הראשונות לשתילת העץ פירותיו אסורים באכילה ובהנאה). לאחר מכן, בעת קבלת הזיתים בבית הבד וייצור השמן - יש לוודא שלא עורבבו בשמן חומרים נוספים.

## כיום התהליך מהיר

בתקופות קדומות היו טוחנים את הזיתים בריחיים של אבן ולאחר מכן מפרידים את הגֶפֶת (הגלעינים והקליפות) מן הנוזלים, בסינון ידני. בשלב שני היו מפרידים מים שהתערבבו בשמן (גשם שירד בזמן המסיק והיה ספוג בזיתים או שאריות משטיפת הזיתים) על ידי השהיה כמה ימים במכל עד שהשמן יצוף למעלה והמים ישקעו לתחתית ואז מסלקים את המים. לאחר מכן היו מוסיפים וממתינים לשקיעת השמרים המעורבים בשמן לתחתית המכל. זהו תהליך ממושך שארך ימים רבים.

את השמן להדלקת המנורה היו מיצרים בשיטה מסורתית מיוחדת שמלכתחילה מנעה עירוב של גֶפֶת ושמרים בשמן. תהליך הייצור נעשה על ידי כתישה ראשונית ומינימלית במכתשת ידנית, והעברת הזיתים הכתושים לסל עם נקבים צפופים עד אשר יזוב ממנו שמן זית צלול. גם

בתהליך זה יש להמתין להיפרדות הנוזלים מן השמן, וכל זה - כולל השינוע לבית המקדש - **דרש שמונה ימים**.

כיום, התהליך הוא מכני ומהיר יותר. גיקיון הזיתים והטחינה נעשים בתהליך אוטומטי במסוע שמפריד בין העלים והפסולת לבין הזיתים. הטחינה מתבצעת בריחיים חשמליות. וההפרדה בין הגֶפֶת לנוזלים כמו גם סילוקם של המים שנתערבבו בשמן - מבוצעים בתהליך מהיר. תהליך זה כולל סינון ראשוני על משטחי מתכת מחוררים, המשך הסינון באמצעות צנטריפוגה שמסתובבת במהירות וגורמת לכך שהגפת והפסולת הכבדים ייפרדו מהנוזלים. וגם הנוזלים בעצמם נפרדים, כאשר המים שנתערבבו בשמן יוצאים לכיוון אחד ואילו השמן יוצא לכיוון השני. לאחר מכן צריך להמתין עד שמשקעי השמן (השמרים) ירדו לתחתית המכל (את המשקעים שאינם ראויים למאכל מוכרים כ"שמן למאור") והשמן יצוף למעלה, צלול וזך.

## צוד סיבות לפיקוח

ישנה נקודה כשרותית נוספת המצריכה שימת לב מיוחדת בפיקוח על יבול כרמי הזיתים בארץ ישראל: מכל שנת יבול יש צורך להפריש תרומות ומעשרות. יוצאת מן הכלל היא השנה הרביעית לשתילת העץ, השנה הראשונה שבה מותר לאכול את הפירות או השמן המופק מהם לאחר שנות הערלה, פירות השנה הזו נקראים "נֶטֶע רִבְעִי". הם פטורים מתרומות ומעשרות, ומשכך גם אין להפריש מהם על פירות של עצים מבוגרים יותר, החייבים במעשרות.

בדרך כלל בתי בד מקבלים יבולים מכרמים שונים, ביניהם גם כרמים משנת ה"רִבְעִי", וחובה להפריד - לפני הפרשת תרומות ומעשרות - בין השמן המופק מזיתי הכרמים הללו לבין שמן המופק מזיתים של הכרמים הוותיקים. לפירות השנה הרביעית יש קדושה ("קודש הילולים לה'"), ובזמן שבית המקדש היה קיים, היו מעלים אותם לירושלים ואוכלים אותם שם. בימינו,

אנו מחללים (ממירים) את קדושת פירות ה"רִבְעִי" על מטבע שיקבל את הקדושה במקום הפירות; ושומרים את המטבע על מנת להשתמש בו בירושלים כשיבנה בית המקדש (בקרוב ממש). אפשרות נוספת היא להשחית את המטבע כאשר מגיע זמן הביעור (ערב פסח של שנת השמיטה וערב פסח של השנה הרביעית לשמיטה הם זמני הביעור של המעשרות).

## בציפייה לחנוכה הבית

בחזרה לנס חנוכה.

ה'טורי זהב' (ממפרשי ה'שולחן ערוך') מבאר את מהות נס פך השמן, על פי ספר הזוהר הקדוש: הנס לא התחיל רק ביום השני, כאשר התברר שנשאר שמן מאתמול. הנס החל כבר ביום הראשון, כאשר השמן שאמור היה להתכלות, נותר להתקיים בבזיכי המנורה או בפך השמן. אילולא היה השמן נשאר כבר ביום הראשון - הוא מסביר - לא היה הקב"ה מחולל נס ביום השני ובורא שמן שלא היה קיים בעולם, שכן הברכה איננה שורה על מקום ריק אלא רק על מקום או חפץ קיים, ממנו הברכה יכולה לצמוח. חז"ל דורשים (שמות רבה שיר השירים א,ג) על הפסוק "לִרְיָח שְׁמִינִי טוֹבִים" - "שתי תורות הן, תורה שבכתב ותורה שבעל פה". וכן במקומות רבים נוספים, התורה וכן תלמידי חכמים נמשלו לשמן.

נוכחותו של נשיא ארגוננו הגה"ח רבי דן יואל ליווי זצ"ל, שחכמת התורה וקדושתה היו נר לרגליו, חסרה לנו יום. במיוחד בימים אלה כאשר "החושך יכסה ארץ וערפל לאומים" (ישעיהו ס"ב), אנו זקוקים לאורו הבהיר והמאיר. יהי רצון שנזכה במהרה לקיום הייעוד (ישעיהו ס"ח) "לא יישמע עוד חמס בארצך שוד ושָׂבָר בגבולֶיךָ". ו"הזמן גרמא" - חנוכה בית המקדש השלישי כבר בימי החנוכה הקרבים ובאים ועוד לפניהם, בביאת גואל צדק ובתחיית המתים במהרה בימינו אמן.



# ימי החנוכה - עת רצון לגאולה אתגרי הכשרות בנס פך השמן



מאת הרב שלמה חיים הלוי וינפלד  
Executive Kashrus Vaad

והיה משה מעכב הקמתו עד ניסן שבו נולד יצחק ונגאלו ישראל ממצרים... והפסיד חודש כסלו, כיוון שבו נגמרה המלאכה מדוע לא זכה בהקמתו? אמר הקב"ה, עליי לשלם מה שהפסדת. ושילם לו בימי חנוכה בית חשמונאי בנס חנוכה. ומזה הטעם אנו קורין בתורה בימי החנוכה בסדר חנוכה המזבח. נמצא אפוא כי גם בחודש כסלו אנו מוצאים חזרתיות סגולית מיוחדת - חנוכה המשכן וחג החנוכה. כלומר, "הזמן גרמא".

## מדוע שמונה ימים

הסיבה לכך שחז"ל תיקנו לחגוג את נס הניצחון על היוונים ואת החזרה לעבודת המקדש, שמונה ימים ולא יום אחד בלבד, מופיעה בתלמוד (שבת כא,ב): "שכשכנסו יוונים להיכל, טימאו כל השמנים שבהיכל. וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי וניצחום, בדקו ולא מצאו אלא פך אחד של שמן שהיה

מומלץ לדחות את הבירור למועד אחר. שכן, כאמור, מזלו של החודש - רע. ולעומת זאת, "משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה". חודש אדר בו "נולד משה רבנו" מושיעם של ישראל ו"החודש אשר נהפך להם מיגון לשמחה ומאכל ליום טוב", הוא זמן מומלץ מאוד לאירועי שמחה, כמו גם להתדיינות משפטית עם לא יהודים.

## חזרתיות סגולית

כך גם ימי החנוכה בהם אנו חוגגים את ניצחון ישראל על ממלכת יוון שביקשה לכבוש את ארצנו ולכפות עלינו את תרבותה. אנו מודים לקב"ה על הניסים והנפלאות שעשה לנו, כאשר מִסֵּר "גיבורים ביד חלשים ורבים ביד מעטים וטמאים ביד טהורים".

גם על ימים אלה ומשמעותם ניתן לומר, כי "הזמן גרמא", כמובא במדרש (פסיקתא רבתי ו, ה): "אמר רבי חנינא, בכ"ה בכסלו נגמרה מלאכת המשכן...

"הזמן גרמא" הוא מושג הלכתי המסמל בדרך כלל מצוות המתחייבות בזמן מסויים. לדוגמה, ישיבה בסוכה בחג הסוכות הינה "מצוות עשה שהזמן גרמא". כך גם אכילת מצה בליל חג הפסח ושמיעת קול שופר בראש השנה הן "מצוות עשה שהזמן גרמא". ואולם בהיבט פנימי, למושג "הזמן גרמא" יש משמעות נוספת והיא שזמנים מסוימים בשנה נושאים בחובם מִטְעֵן היסטורי סגולי של השפעה רוחנית ארוכת טווח.

לדוגמה, "משנכנס אב ממעטים בשמחה". מדוע? מפני שחודש זה "ריע מְזִלְיָה" (מזלו רע). משחר ההיסטוריה אירעו בו מאורעות קשים ורעים לעם ישראל - החל מ"חטא המרגלים" והמשך בחורבן בית ראשון ולאחר מכן בית שני. על כן ממליץ לנו התלמוד להימנע בחודש אב מפעולות משמעותיות המבטאות שמחה, וכן אם יש ליהודי בירור משפטי עם אדם שאינו יהודי



# MEATBALL NOODLE SOUP

**MEAT | YIELDS 6-8 SERVINGS**

If your kids are spaghetti-and-meatballs fans and they love soup, they'll love this cozy take on the classic dish. I dream about this soup and it is actually one of my go-to dinners in the winter, because to me, this is the epitome of comfort food, and when comfort food is also kid friendly, I call that a massive win!

## MEATBALLS

1 lb ground beef  
½ small onion, minced (about ¼ cup)  
2-3 Tbsp fresh parsley, chopped  
½ tsp allspice  
½ tsp sea salt  
¼ tsp black pepper  
1 Tbsp oil

## SOUP

2 Tbsp oil  
1¼ cups extra-fine egg noodles, lightly crushed, or vermicelli  
3 garlic cloves, minced, or 3 frozen garlic cubes  
¼ cup tomato paste  
32 oz chicken broth  
3 cups water  
1 chicken bouillon cube  
1 tsp garlic powder  
1 tsp sea salt  
½ tsp black pepper  
chopped fresh parsley, for garnish, optional

## DIRECTIONS

In a bowl, mix ground beef, onion, parsley, allspice, salt, and pepper until just combined. Form 25 mini meatballs, approximately the size of a quarter.

Heat a saucepan over medium-high heat. Add oil; sear meatballs on both sides, 1-2 minutes per side. Transfer meatballs to a plate.

Reduce heat to medium. Add noodles; sauté for 30 seconds. Add garlic and tomato paste, stirring well. Cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly.

Add chicken broth, water, bouillon cube, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Stir well. Add meatballs; bring to a boil.

Reduce heat to low; simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Garnish with parsley before serving.

## TIP

This soup can be kept frozen for 2-3 months when properly stored in an airtight container. Defrost overnight in the refrigerator. Heat, covered, on the stove over low heat until heated through.

*In Marblespoon at Home, bestselling author Vera Newman – whose thousands of fans turn to her for bold, unique, and family-friendly meal ideas – shares a brand-new collection of recipes you will absolutely love, and best of all, they are easy to make, with ingredients that you already have in your home. Purchase Marblespoon at ArtScroll.com or at your local Hebrew bookstore.*





# Ⓚ Kosher Seeing Record Growth on the West Coast

BY DINA FRAENKEL

**W**hen Rabbi Berel Levy, ob”m, took the helm of Ⓚ Kosher in 1968, he had one goal: to raise the standard of industrial kashrus worldwide. What started as half a dozen West Coast facilities in the 1980s has grown to hundreds of industrial and food service certifications. Throughout the last decade, Ⓚ Kosher Certification has seen exponential growth in kosher supervision on the West Coast. I sat down with three significant players in the Ⓚ West Coast kashrus operation – **Rabbi Shlomo Klein**, West Coast Rabbinic Coordinator, **Rabbi Sholom Kesselman**, West Coast Food Service and Community Coordinator, and **Rabbi Binyomin Fajnland**, Senior Field Representative, who has worked for the Ⓚ for over 30 years, to hear firsthand how the Ⓚ is changing the face of kashrus on the West Coast.

Almost 40 years ago, Rabbi Berel Levy approached Rabbi Binyomin Fajnland, the Chabad Shaliach in Long Beach, California, and asked to meet in his small basement office in Boro Park, Brooklyn. The previous mashgiach for the West Coast was moving on and there was an important role to fill. Rabbi Levy told Rabbi Fajnland that he was looking for a quality mashgiach with Yiras Shomayim who lived in California and asked if he would take the job. Rabbi Fajnland agreed and was the Ⓚ’s only field representative on the West Coast for several years. At the time, he visited all the Ⓚ certified facilities on the West Coast and, after several years, at the urging of Rabbi Don Yoel Levy, ob”m, he made periodic two-week trips to the Far East for kosher inspec-

tions. Rabbi Fajnland has worked with many expert Rabbinic Coordinators, including Rabbi Dovid Steigman, ob”m, Rabbi Leizer Teitelbaum, ob”m, and yibadlu l’chaim tovim v’aruchim, Rabbi Hershel Krinsky, Rabbi Levi Schapiro, and Rabbi Sholom Ber Hendel. Now, the Ⓚ has more than two dozen field representatives on the West Coast and Rabbi Fajnland personally visits 32 facilities for inspections, making over 300 visits per year.

A pivotal milestone of the Ⓚ’s growth on the West Coast was the arrangement with Kehilla Kosher (also known by its symbol, Heart-K), a local Los Angeles-based agency, in 2015. Rabbi Avrohom Teichman, the Rav HaMachshir of Kehilla Kosher spent considerable time and energy researching the best way



RABBI SHLOMO KLEIN



RABBI SHOLOM  
KESSelman



RABBI BINYOMIN  
FAJNLAND



to ensure the continuity of kashrus supervision for the community. After careful consideration, Rabbi Teichman chose the OK Kosher. Rabbi Teichman knew that the OK is an internationally recognized organization that represents integrity, a high standard of kosher supervision, professionalism, and experience, and would provide premium service to the greater Los Angeles community, with high-quality kosher supervision for local food service establishments well into the future. The OK's standards, systems, and people were the factors that tipped the scales.

At the time, the OK absorbed both industrial and food service establishments. The OK launched its first official West Coast office with its own local Rabbinic Coordinator, Rabbi Shlomo Klein (a prominent local Rav), who would personally oversee the kosher programs of many of its West Coast customers and a dedicated Food Service Coordinator, Rabbi Sholom Kesselman, who taught in various yeshivos before joining the OK. A common thread heard from local customers was how much they appreciated the warm, small-town feel of Kehilla's supervision. It was more than just a business relationship. Customers asked their rabbis for advice on a personal level and the rabbis knew about the customer's families.

Rabbi Kesselman told me that "we are continuing and growing this personal approach with the West Coast office, just as we do in our New York office, mainly in the food service arena, but it also applies to industrial customers. This personal relationship offers a significant benefit for kashrus because it motivates owners and managers to comply with the standards that the OK sets forth. There's a real connection and they don't want to let their rabbi down. At the same time, the OK is a large, international kashrus organization with lots of experience and significant systems, resources, information, and the ability to say no when we need to – either turning down a company that is not a good fit for kashrus, rejecting an ingredient that doesn't meet our standards, or even, when needed, terminating a certification. Here on the West Coast, we try to blend both worlds and give our companies the benefits of a large agency with a small-town flavor."

Rabbi Don Yoel Levy always believed that Rabbinic Coordinators should per-

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sonally acquaint themselves with the companies they oversee. He emphasized the importance of having a personal understanding of manufacturing systems, rather than relying solely on field personnel's reports. He insisted on visits to each certified facility conducted by the Rabbinic Coordinator at least once a year. In addition to the regular visits by the local mashgiach, the Rabbinic Coordinator should maintain close involvement in the day-to-day operation of the facility.

A Rabbinic Coordinator should not be a distant figure in a remote office who merely establishes a kosher program and delegates responsibility. A reliable Rabbinic Coordinator remains current with changes in both production and personnel, maintaining a working relationship with the kosher contact person.

Every company is unique, even the most straightforward ones. "That's something about the OK that is special," relates Rabbi Klein. "We are a very large organization with thousands of companies and facilities, and, along with our uniform written policies, there is a personalized, human connection between the Rabbinic Coordinator,



the mashgiach, and the company personnel involved in the kosher program. We strive to communicate and work together to make sure that the kashrus is at the highest level while remembering that the company is made up of people who want to market and sell their product as easily as possible.”

Our dedicated West Coast office has significantly increased the speed and ease of setting up new companies and solving challenges that come up during the course of certification. Many times, a company applies for kosher certification and wants it as soon as possible. Being nearby allows Rabbi Klein to schedule an initial visit quickly and get the kosher program up and running. In addition, it reduces the travel costs incurred by the companies for headquarters visits. Rabbi Klein offers his take as the West Coast Rabbinic Coordinator: “When there are changes within a production facility or matters that are better addressed in person, it’s much easier to be

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close to my facilities. Usually, I’m just a short drive away and it makes the kosher program much more successful. I’m also in the same time zone, which is very important for questions that come up after business hours end in New York.”

As a complement to his work in California, Rabbi Klein travels to the New York headquarters of ® Kosher for one week each quarter. According to Rabbi Klein, it is perhaps the most important visit he makes. During this week, he meets with colleagues face to face, discusses kashrus challenges, and learns from other Rabbinic Coordinators who have expertise in particular fields. “The Rabbinic Coordinators (worldwide) meet monthly, and most of the year I join these meetings virtually, but I make special effort to ensure my week-long sojourns in New York overlap with this meeting so I can join in person. Being there and interacting with my colleagues in person is extremely valuable.”

I asked Rabbi Klein to share a unique kashrus experience in California and he told me the following story: “I once received an application for a vineyard in Temecula, California, about an hour and a half from Los Angeles. I drove there and met the owner, a doctor who loved wine. He showed me a beautiful vineyard with an abundance of grapes growing. I asked to see the facility where the crushing, fermenting, aging, and bottling would take place. The owner said, ‘Oh, I have no idea how to make wine! I just love it and really want to make it; maybe you can help me?’ So, I told him about a frum Jew that I know in Northern California who has his own vineyard and makes wine there under ® certification and I offered to call him and see if he’d be willing to help. The experienced vintner was happy to help and gave the doctor advice on what to buy, how to make the wine, ingredients, ideas, etc. Now the doctor is making his own wine under the supervision of the ® thanks to the help of this generous man.”

In addition to Rabbi Klein, there are at least 10 traveling industrial mashgichim active in California. Many of these mashgichim inspect facilities based on their geographical location and expertise, but others are experts in specific fields of kashrus and travel all over the state or region to provide



the highest standard of supervision to more complex production facilities.

Rabbi Binyomin Fajnlant is one of those expert mashgichim and is in constant motion. His numerous years of experience and many thousands of inspections, kosherizations, and special productions have left him a treasure trove of stories of hashgacha pratis in kashrus. In his early years with the ©, during Rabbi Berel Levy's tenure, the © was the first kashrus agency to discover an issue that nobody else realized was a problem. Rabbi Fajnlant used to visit the port of Long Beach to inspect ship compartments filled with palm oil. In addition to the palm oil, he saw that most of these ships transported tallow (animal fat), which needed to be heated to maintain its liquid state. "The © was the first to sound the alarm on this issue," he recalled. "We had to make sure that the shipping compartment with the kosher palm oil did not previously contain tallow AND that the compartments next to it on either side did not contain tallow either."

Rabbi Fajnlant shared many stories with me, and the common thread in all of them was the need for siyata d'shmaya when working in kashrus. Of course, the mashgiach needs to know Halacha well, and he has to know how the machinery works and what it is used for, but a hefty dose of Hashem's help is what makes all the difference when making inspections.

"Once, when I traveled to China to inspect a factory making bamboo shoots, I noticed a room with a chain and lock on the door. I asked the person accompanying

was one facility that operated from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Now they have three facilities operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "We have full-time mashgichim in each facility every day," shared Rabbi Fajnlant. "The © worked with them to help them grow their kosher program and their business by leaps and bounds. We have a very successful relationship with all levels of personnel – management, supervisors, and workers."

© Kosher is the premier food service kosher certification in the Los Angeles area and the number of certified facilities is consistently increasing. When Rabbi Fajnlant first came to the Los Angeles area in 1978, meat, chicken, and dairy products had to be imported from New York. "The state of kashrus was a far cry from what we have now," he reminisced. "There were no restaurants, only a few grocery stores, and one bakery, the famous Schwartz Bakery, which is now © certified. Now the amount of kosher food available in Los Angeles is astounding! We have regular deliveries of locally produced cholov Yisroel milk, certified by the © under the Kosher Pastures brand, and dozens of restaurants and shops."

"When we were discussing growth," Rabbi Kesselman related, "Rabbi Kalman Weinfeld, member of the © Executive Kashrus Vaad and lead Rabbinic Coordinator for Food Service, helped me understand that quality trumps quantity. We are people's first call when they want to go kosher and I'm very proud of that; only about 25% of applications are accepted because we only take estab-

**"We are people's first call when they want to go kosher and I'm very proud of that; only about 25% of applications are accepted because we only take establishments that we feel will be compliant with our high standards from a kashrus perspective."**

me about the room and he told me it was nothing special, just some machinery. I asked to open it and the company pushed back, but I insisted, and they relented. Behind the door was a room full of flavors! I suspected something was amiss because the company claimed to be only producing bamboo shoots. I went into the warehouse and saw all kinds of canned soups. These soups were not kosher, and we could not allow the bamboo shoots to have the © symbol on the can. A new restriction was imposed and a mashgiach had to come in from Hong Kong to kasher and supervise a special production each time the company wanted to have a kosher run."

Rabbi Fajnlant counts a globally recognized flavor house as one of the major success stories of the © on the West Coast. When he started visiting the company there

lishments that we feel will be compliant with our high standards from a kashrus perspective."

Certifying food service accounts in California does not come without challenges. One of the initial challenges that the © has successfully overcome is the dearth of qualified mashgichim in the area. We've increased the quality of the mashgichim we hire by providing extensive and ongoing training to our mashgichim. But no matter how much training we provide, Los Angeles has a much smaller frum community than New York so the pool of potential mashgichim is smaller as well. Add to that the high cost of living in Los Angeles and it is not always easy to find mashgichim. Despite the challenges, the © currently has approximately 120 foodservice mashgichim in the Los Angeles area.



Rabbi Kesselman was proud to tell me about the next challenge he faces: "Another formidable, but welcome challenge is our high standards in kashrus. We are not the only agency in the Los Angeles area and the © has raised the general standards of kashrus in the area - we're glad to be a leader in kashrus for the public benefit. It's an ongoing conversation with owners who don't always understand why the store down the road can do things that our establishments cannot. I explain it to them like this: We (together) uphold a higher standard and people across the kosher spectrum request and appreciate that and will eat in your restaurant when the © symbol is in your window."

To uphold these high standards, the © utilizes a rigorous training program for food service mashgiachim. Before their first assignment, each mashgiach needs to complete an online course that was specially designed for © Kosher. After completing the course successfully, a new mashgiach spends several days getting on-the-job training from an experienced mashgiach in one of our certified facilities.

In addition, we offer ongoing guidance and support to our mashgiachim. "Rabbi Yiftach, one of our key food-service rabbis in Los Angeles, is a huge asset to our West Coast operation. He and I inspect restaurants and caterers under our certification, and we observe the mashgiach doing his job, speak with him and point out any areas that can be improved. We visit each facility once or twice a week (in addition to the full-time on-site mashgiach), which is well above the usual standard in the area, so we see each mashgiach regularly. The © also hosts a West Coast Mashgiach Conference biannually, gathering all the food service mashgiachim for a few days of intensive training and education."

Communal kashrus education is a big part of the ©'s West Coast presence. Rabbi Kesselman speaks quite often at schools and shuls in the greater Los Angeles area, teaching about practical kashrus and helping people raise their personal kashrus standards. Last year, the © hosted a large communal event in a local shul that was open to the entire Los Angeles community. Rabbi Chaim Fogelman and Rabbi Kalman Weinfeld, members of the Executive Kashrus Vaad flew in from New York and joined Rabbi Klein and Rabbi Kesselman in a well-attended panel Q&A session. "Rabbi Klein and I are also available on a personal level to local consumers," Rabbi Kesselman said. "Between the two of us, we receive 20-30 questions on a typical day from locals who need kashrus advice at home or in the grocery store."

The West Coast Food Service department is more than just an asset to the kosher observant community in Los Angeles, although the universally accepted high standards are arguably the biggest benefit to consumers. Foodservice impacts our industrial growth as well. The © has received many industrial applications for kosher certification through our food service presence. Everyone knows about the © in California and our customers are

## Hashem should guide me in the right path to make sure things are not only kosher but kosher b'hiddur.

quick to recommend our services to their friends and colleagues who are looking to go kosher.

The West Coast is now a bastion of kosher, with the © leading the way as a major force in high-quality kosher supervision. What started with only a few basic industrial facilities has grown to include the largest beverage facility on the West Coast, and possibly the entire country, and industrial productions of cheese, vitamins, flavors, and more.

Rabbi Fajnländ's closing remarks were perhaps the most comprehensive distillation of the ethos of © Kosher. "One of the prayers that I say every day (and all mashgiachim should say) is that Hashem should guide me in the right path to make sure things are not only kosher but kosher b'hiddur. The Lubavitcher Rebbe was very involved behind the scenes with both Rabbi Berel and Rabbi Don Yoel Levy, emphasizing to Rabbi Don Yoel that the field of kashrus is his shlichus. Yes, he gave them brochos, but he also gave a lot of practical guidance regarding questions and challenges they faced in kosher supervision. The main thing was that Rabbi Berel and Rabbi Don Yoel Levy, and the Executive Kashrus Vaad today, worked hard to ensure that the © was not just another good hechsher. They strived to make the © as mehudar as possible in a commercial setting."

I asked Rabbi Eli Lando, Executive Manager of © Kosher, for his take on our West Coast presence and he was effusive in his praise. "Thanks to tremendous siyata d'shmaya and the great team of rabbis and administrative staff on the West Coast, we've seen great growth. We see that the Jewish community on the West Coast can benefit from the systems and structure that © Kosher developed over the years to benefit the local community, kosher consumers, and the many travelers in the area. This is one more step in fulfilling our mission to make kosher available, at the highest possible standards, to consumers worldwide."



**T**he  held its Annual International Rabbinic Conference on Monday, November 13, 29 MarCheshvan, at Ulam Chana in Crown Heights. The conference was attended by over 150  personnel and mashgichim, hailing from all corners of the globe. This year's conference speakers included Rabbi Chaim Fogelman, Executive Kashrus Vaad; Rabbi Shlomo Weinfeld, Executive Kashrus Vaad, Rabbi Chaim Shaul Bruk, Mashgiach and Rabbi in Bozeman, MT; Rabbi Chaim Ozer Metal, Mashgiach and Rabbi in Las Vegas, NV; Rabbi Yakov Teichman, Rabbinic Coordinator; Rabbi Eli Lando, Executive Manager; and, Rav Menachem M. Weissmandl, shlit"a, Rav of Nitra Monsey.



*Photo credits to Shalom Ross/Anash.org*











What's So Complicated About

# Chocolate

By Rabbi Don Yoel Levy OBM

**A**s many readers are aware, there was a controversy in the world of chocolate production over the summer [2013] and many brands of *pareve* chocolate chips became dairy. Most notably, the famous Trader Joe's chips under the supervision of the © had a status change from kosher *pareve*, to kosher dairy. In light of the intense focus on chocolate production and the many *kashrus* implications involved, I spoke at length about the general process of chocolate production and kosher certification process at our recent *Mashgiach* Conference.

Chocolate production begins in Africa and Central America where the pods of cocoa beans are hand cut from trees, split open and the beans removed. The beans are then fermented by laying them in a sunny field and covering the beans with banana leaves. The beans ferment and turn brown after about 5-8 days. The fermentation process is not an issue for *Pesach* because no yeast is used in the fermentation process. It is a natural process that occurs inside the actual bean. After fermentation, the beans are transported to factories throughout the world for the actual production.

Once the fermented cocoa beans reach the factory they are roasted with the shells still attached and then winnowed into small bits called nibs. The nibs are then heated and melted into chocolate liquor. The liquor can be pressed and separated into cocoa butter and cocoa powder, or it can be kept in liquid form. Some people are under the mistaken impression that cocoa butter is dairy, but it is in fact *pareve*. It is only called "butter" as a description of the consistency, much like shea butter and coconut butter.

In order to make chocolate, the cocoa liquor (or butter or powder) is blended with sugar and lecithin. Starch can also be introduced into the mix, which can be an issue for *Pesach* since the starch is either *chometz* or *kitniyos*. The mixer is heated to maintain the liquidity of the chocolate. The mixer itself is one of the biggest potential *kashrus* concerns in the chocolate production. Many, if not most, chocolate factories produce both *pareve* and dairy products and want to use the same equipment for both. The typical and accepted way to *kasher* a pot (mixer in this case) is by *hagola* (boiling over with water). Companies are very reluctant to bring water into a chocolate factory because if any water gets into the actual chocolate it ruins the production and causes the chocolate to inflate like fudge. In

addition, it can introduce bacteria into the chocolate which is obviously a quality concern. At © certified factories that want to use the same mixer for dairy and *pareve* chocolate, we add a control to the machine to prevent the chocolate mixture from reaching the temperature of *Yad Soledes Bo* (too hot to touch with the hand). Of course, the mixer is thoroughly cleaned out before *pareve* productions.

After the blending stage, the chocolate mixture goes through a series of five rollers. The center roller can reach 60 degrees Celsius, which means the roller requires *kashering* between dairy and *pareve*. During the conch stage, the chocolate is mixed for over 24 hours. The liquid gets quite hot, with dark chocolate reaching a higher temperature than milk chocolate, above the temperature of *Yad Soledes Bo*.

Since it is rare that a company will agree to *kasher* by *hagolah*, we have to *kasher* by *libbun* (burning with fire) which is much more difficult. The machinery often has many layers and very thick walls, so it is difficult to discern how long the fire must be lit under the machine in order to *kasher* by *libbun*. A series of calculations, based on the temperature of the fire and the thickness of the walls of the machine, are made to determine the amount of time needed to complete the *libbun*.



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זכרונות לברכה

הרב דן יואל ליווי ע"ה  
כ"ב ניסן ה'תש"פ

Due to the complexity of *kasher-ing* chocolate equipment between dairy and *pareve*, the © encourages the use of separate lines for dairy and *pareve* productions. In fact, we implemented this standard about 35 years ago! Sometimes, a chocolate production does not turn out well and the chocolate is recycled, called "rework", and run through the entire production process again. It is very important to ensure that dairy "rework" does not end up reprocessed on a *pareve* production line.

Once the chocolate production is complete, it is often stored in liquid form in tanks and shipped to other factories for molding, wrapping and packaging. As discussed in previous articles, bulk liquid transport has a host of kosher requirements. In addition, during the wrapping and packaging process it is vital to be sure that dairy chocolate does not mistakenly end up in packages of *pareve* chocolate. This actual scenario happened with a well-known brand of chocolate chips this summer. The company decided to change the packaging protocol and stop thoroughly cleaning out the machine between dairy and *pareve* packaging runs. Unfortunately, the new method does not ensure that no dairy chocolate chips are left in the packaging machine. As a result, every bag of

previously *pareve* chocolate chips has a high probability of being contaminated with actual dairy chocolate chips. Therefore, the kosher designation on this well-known brand was changed from *pareve* to dairy.

As you can see, even a seemingly simple product with few ingredients can present a wide array of *kashrus* concerns. Even the simple pleasure of a chocolate bar requires diligent kosher supervision from beginning to end. When you enjoy your homemade chocolate chip cookie for dessert on *Shabbos* afternoon, or a few squares of dark chocolate on *Pesach*, you want to be sure that the highest standards were upheld and not one tiny dairy chocolate chip entered your bag of *pareve* chocolate chips, and not the slightest bit of *chometz* was in the factory that created your delicious kosher for *Pesach* chocolate bar. As you bite into a chocolate coin this *Chanukah* just remember, we are what we eat and we should only accept the best for ourselves and our families – kosher without compromise.

## REMEMBERING RABBI DON YOEL LEVY OB"m

Kashrus Administrator of  
© Kosher Certification  
1987-2020





# Soup

We all know that chicken soup is the Jewish penicillin; nothing beats it when you're feeling under the weather. What you may not know is that soup has many health benefits and makes a hearty meal for cold winter nights.

As we know, chicken soup can help prevent and even fight off the common cold. The carrots, garlic, onions and celery contain tons of immune boosting compounds.

Soup retains nutritional value in the broth even after its cooked – it is high in vitamins, minerals and proteins.

Lentil, vegetable and other high fiber soups help you stay full longer and aid in digestion.

Eating soup is an easy and tasty way to consume more vegetables.

Bone broth (made by simmering the joint bones of beef and poultry for 12-24 hours) is especially nutrient dense. It contains collagen for hair, nails, skin and joints, supports healthy sleep, and helps maintain the immune system.

Ramen bowls, a popular Asian soup featuring bone broth, meat, vegetables and noodles is a hearty and healthy choice that takes only a few minutes to assemble.

Soup can help keep you hydrated during the winter months when it's not unusual for people to skimp on their water intake.

Making soup is a great way to avoid waste. Just take the veggies that are past their prime and turn them into something filling and nutritious.





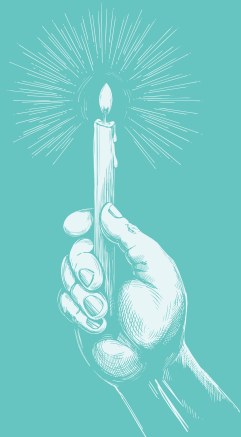
# 4 CHANUKAH HIGHLIGHTS

## SOUL NUTRITION

By Rabbi Chaim Fogelman

# 1

The B'nei Yissachar writes in the name of Reb Pinchus Koritz that on Chanukah during the lighting of the candles, the hidden light of Moshiach is revealed.



# 2

Some say it's not proper to light Chanukah candles lined up on a table without a candle holder (menorah) because the miracle happened with a vessel (that held the oil).



# 3

On Chanukah and Sukkos, we recite the entire Hallel every day, but on Pesach, we only recite the full Hallel on the first two days, and for the rest of Yom Tov we recite half Hallel, just like on Rosh Chodesh. Pesach is considered one long Yom Tov, which is why we start with the entire Hallel and then say half Hallel for the rest of the days, and Rosh Chodesh is a single Yom Tov. However, Sukkos had different korbonos each day, which made each day unique and like a holiday unto itself. The same holds true for Chanukah, where each day we light a new, additional candle, making each day its own unique holiday.



# 4

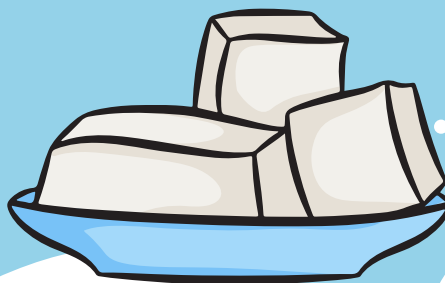
On Chanukah, Hashem saved Klal Yisroel in a way that was above nature. A few Maccabees were victorious against a mighty army and a small jug of oil burned for 8 days. Unlike Purim, where the Yidden all fasted and gathered together (the children) to daven for salvation, He didn't wait for us to do *teshuvah* or *daven*. That's why on Chanukah we say, "You waged *their* battles and defended *their* rights," and on Purim,

after the Megillah, we say, "You waged *our* battles and defended *our* rights." This is also why the dreidel is spun from the top (the miracle was entirely from Above) and the gragger from the bottom (because we did *teshuvah* and merited a miracle). May Hashem have mercy on us today with miracles that only He can do, and may we be victorious like the Maccabees, speedily in our days.





# LOOK: *Soft Cheese*



By Rabbi Sholom Ber Hendel,  
 © Executive Kashrus Vaad

## WHAT IS SOFT CHEESE?

Soft cheeses are fresh or young (not aged) cheeses with a high moisture content that makes it soft enough to spread. Some common examples are yogurt, cream cheese, sour cream and cottage cheese. They can be used as spreads, mixed with fruit and granola, or as ingredients in frosting, baked goods, salads, dips, dressing, as a replacement for mayonnaise, in all types of savory appetizers, or for sweet desserts such as cheesecakes and more. Soft cheeses are also consumed for their nutritional value. Yogurt has the added probiotic benefit from active cultures that contribute to a healthy digestive system.

## HOW ARE SOFT CHEESES PRODUCED?

Cheese is created when the casein proteins found in milk stick to each other and separate from the whey. This process doesn't happen naturally in fresh milk, because the casein micelles (a group of molecules) are covered with a negative charge, so they naturally repel each other.

There are two ways to produce cheese from milk, with rennet or with acid. Hard cheeses, such as mozzarella, cheddar, parmesan or Swiss, are produced using rennet, an enzyme that cuts the outer layer of the casein molecule, which has the negative charge, and allows the molecules to connect and form cheese. These are referred to as rennet-set cheeses. Soft cheeses, such as cottage cheese, cream cheese, sour cream and yogurt, are produced using acids that neutralize the negative charge surrounding the

casein. The acid also dissolves calcium, which is the glue that holds the casein micelles in cheese together, so soft cheeses have less calcium and are, therefore, softer.

Historically, soft cheeses were created from milk that was left at room temperature to sour via naturally occurring bacteria. However, today, cheese production begins with pasteurized milk. Non-fat dry milk can be added to create reduced fat products and cream can be added to raise the fat level.

The milk and cream are pumped into mixing tanks, mixed with additional ingredients, homogenized, pasteurized and then cooled to the desired temperature. The product is then pumped into a vat or tank where acid or a starter culture (the culture converts the lactose in the milk into lactic acid) is added, causing the milk to become cheese.

## FROM HERE, THE PROCESS IS DIFFERENT FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF SOFT CHEESE:

- **SOUR CREAM** and yogurt are cooled and packaged. Additives such as fruit fillings can be mixed into the product before packaging. (Greek yogurts have thicker consistency because the whey is removed.)
- **CREAM CHEESE** – The cheese curds are separated from the whey, heated, mixed with stabilizers, cooled and packaged.





• **COTTAGE CHEESE** is a mixture of curds and dressing. First, the curds are separated from the whey. A small amount of rennet is added to the vat at the beginning to speed up the process. The curds are cut into pieces, cooked, separated from the whey, mixed with dressing and then packaged. The dressing is a mixture of cream and additional ingredients, which are homogenized, pasteurized, and then blended with the curd to form cottage cheese.

### ARE SOFT CHEESES KOSHER?

Soft cheeses always require a reliable kosher certification to ensure that all the cultures, additives, and different toppings or fruit fillings are kosher. A typical non-kosher ingredient in soft cheese is gelatin, which can be used in sour creams and yogurts. The equipment also needs to be monitored to ensure that it does not process any non-kosher products or that a proper kosherization is performed.

There is a Rabbinic prohibition against *Gevinas Akum*<sup>1</sup>, where cheese made by a non-Jew is considered non-kosher due to the possible use of non-kosher animal rennet.<sup>2</sup> As previously discussed, rennet is an essential ingredient in the forming of hard cheeses, and occurs naturally in calf stomach linings. If the rennet comes

from a non-kosher source, the cheese is non-kosher, and even with a low usage level below 1/60<sup>th</sup>, the rennet is considered a *davar hamaamid* (something that gives the product its form) and is not nullified.<sup>3</sup>

Some Poskim<sup>4</sup> hold that the rabbinical prohibition on *Gevinas Akum* includes all forms of cheeses. However, the accepted custom in the United States is to follow the psak of Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin, ztz"l, who held that acid-set cheeses were never included in the rabbinical prohibition as there was no reason to ever be concerned that a non-kosher rennet was used in production. This psak is accepted for the certification of Cholv Stam soft cheeses, but, when certifying Cholv Yisroel soft cheese, a mashgiach will always be present and add the acid or cultures to the vat to satisfy all opinions.

As mentioned above, small amounts of rennet can be used in the processing of soft cheeses, such as cottage cheese to speed the curdling process. However, the usage level is extremely low, 1-2 ml in 116 gallons of milk, compared to the typical usage level of 70-130 ml of rennet in the same amount of milk in rennet-set cheese. This rennet isn't enough to cause true coagulation on its own; it is just there to speed up the process and is not considered *davar hamaamid* and does not classify the cheese as rennet-set from a kosher perspective.

1 Shulchan Oruch YD 115:2.

2 See Kosher Spirit Chanukah 5781 for a longer discussion.

3 Shulchan Oruch YD 87:11.

4 See Chochmas Adam 53:38 and Oruch Hashulchan YD 115:16.



# CHASSIDIC INSIGHTS

## Rush & Return

Compiled by Dina Fraenkel

**T**he lamps of the menorah are seen as representing the souls of Israel, and the various laws governing the menorah's construction and the lighting of its lamps are explained by the Chassidic masters as instructive of the nature and structure of the people of Israel, the manner in which the potential of the soul of man is to be ignited, the duties of the "lamp-lighter," and numerous other insights into the spiritual art of lamplighting. The foundation of the menorah/people lamp/soul equation is Shlomo HaMelech's declaration in the Book of Proverbs: "A lamp of Gd, the soul of man." The founder of Chabad Chassidism, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, delves into this metaphor, finding in the components of the physical lamp a detailed anatomy of the human soul. The following is based on Rabbi Schneur Zalman's analysis and subsequent discourses penned by the later rebbes of Chabad.

### The Flame: Antipodal Strivings

The flame surges upwards, as if to tear free from the wick and lose itself in the great expanses of energy that gird the heavens. But even as it strains heavenward, it is already pulling back, tightening its grip on the wick and drinking thirstily of the oil in the lamp — oil that sustains its continued existence as an individual flame. And it is this tension of conflicting energies, this vacillation from being to dissolution and back again, that produces light. The soul, too, yearns for transcendence, yearns to tear free of the entanglements of material life and achieve a self-nullifying reunion with its Creator and Source. At the same time, however, it is also driven by a will to be — a will to live a physical life and make its mark upon a physical world. In the "lamp

of Gd" that is man, these polar drives converge in a flame that illuminates its surroundings with a Gdly light.

### The Ingredients

How is a flame generated and sustained? By means of a lamp, consisting of oil, a wick, and a vessel containing them so that the oil is fed through the wick to a burning flame.

Oil and wick are both combustible substances. But neither could produce light on its own with the efficiency and stability of the lamp. The wick, if ignited, would flare briefly and die, utterly consumed. As for the oil, one would find it extremely difficult to ignite at all. But when wick and oil are brought together in the lamp, they produce a controlled and steady light.

The soul of man is a lamp of Gd whose purpose in life is to illuminate the world with divine light. Gd provided us with the "fuel" that generates His light — the Torah and its commandments (mitzvot), which embody His wisdom and will and convey His luminous truth.

The divine oil requires a "wick" — a physical body — to channel its substance and convert it into an illuminating flame. The Torah is the divine wisdom; but for divine wisdom to be manifest in our world, there must be physical minds that study it and comprehend it, physical mouths that debate it and teach it, and physical media that publish it and disseminate it. The mitzvot are the divine will; but for the divine will to be manifest in our world, there must be physical hands that actualize it and physical materials (animal hide for tefillin, wool for tzitzit, money for charity) with which it is actualized.

And just as the divine oil cannot produce light without a material wick,

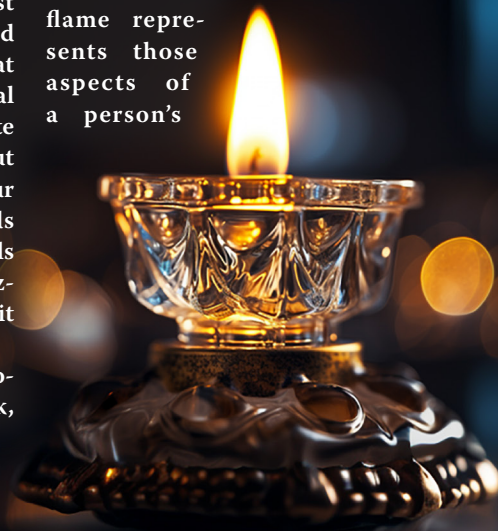
neither can a wick without oil. A life without Torah and mitzvot, however aflame with the desire to come close to Gd, is incapable of sustaining its flame. It might generate flashes of ecstatic spiritual experience, but lacking oil of genuine divine substance, these quickly die out and fail to introduce any enduring light into the world.

To realize its role as a "lamp of Gd," a human life must be a lamp that combines a physical existence (the "wick") with the divine ideas and deeds of Torah (the "oil"). When the wick is saturated with oil and feeds its spiritual yearnings with a steady supply of the same, the resultant flame is both luminous and sustainable, preserving the existence and productivity of the wick and illuminating the corner of the world in which it has been placed.

### Hues of Light

The flame itself is a multi-colored affair, alluding to the many levels on which man relates to the Creator through his observance of the mitzvot. Generally speaking, there is the lower and darker area of the flame which adjoins the wick, and its upper and brighter part.

The darker segment of the flame represents those aspects of a person's





service of Gd which are colored by their association with the physicality of the "wick"--that is, mitzvot which are motivated by self-interest. The higher and purer part of the flame represents a persons moments of self-transcendence, deeds which a person does—as the Rambam writes--"not for any reason in the world: not out of fear of evil or out of a desire to obtain the good; rather, he does the truth because it is true."

Both these aspects of a person's life are reflected in his relationship with Gd. The mitzvot come not only to bind his altruistic "Gdly soul" to the Almighty, but also to involve his ego-dominated "animal soul" in the fulfillment of the divine will. This is achieved when a person understands that he should "love the Lord your Gd... for He is your life" (Devarim 30:20). By recognizing that Gd is the source and sustainer of his very being, the very same ego which earlier craved the most material of pleasures is now drawn to attach itself

to the Almighty, out of the realization that there is no greater fulfillment of self possible.

### Rush and Return

Thus the "wick" is both prison and liberator for the flame, both tether and lifeline. It holds the soul in its distinctiveness from the divine whole, in its apartness from its Creator. And yet, it is this distinctiveness and apartness, this incarnation in a physical life, which allows us to connect to Gd in the deepest and most meaningful way — by fulfilling His will.

So when divine command, physical body and human life come together as oil, wick and lamp, the result is a flame: a relationship with Gd that is characterized by two conflicting drives, by a yearning to come close coupled with a commitment to draw back. The materiality of life evokes in the soul a desire to tear free of it and fuse with the Divine. But the closer the soul is drawn to

Gd, all the more does it recognize that it can fulfill His will only as a distinct and physical being. So while the corporeality of the wick triggers the flames upward surge, the divine will implicit in the oil sustains its commitment to existence and life.

Every mitzvah is oil for the soul: with every act that constitutes a fulfillment of the divine will, our lives are rendered into burning lamps, alight with flames that vacillate from heaven to earth and back again and illuminate the world in the process.

*Based on the writings of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch (1773-1827), and the Lubavitcher Rebbe; adaptation by Yanki Tauber.*

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## ופרוש עלינו סוכת שלומך

מאת הרב שלמה חיים הלוי וינפלד

Unfortunately, this article, which appeared in the Tishrei 5784 issue contained printing errors. The misprinted paragraphs are reprinted correctly here and an updated version will be available at [kosherspirit.com](http://kosherspirit.com).

56\*56 ס"מ, ולפי החזו"א מעט פחות מ-68\*68 ס"מ). לפיכך על דפנות הסוכה להיות בגודל מינימלי של שבעה טפחים כשאת שאר חלל הדופן ניתן להשאיר עם מסגרת (ריקה) של 'צורת פתח'.

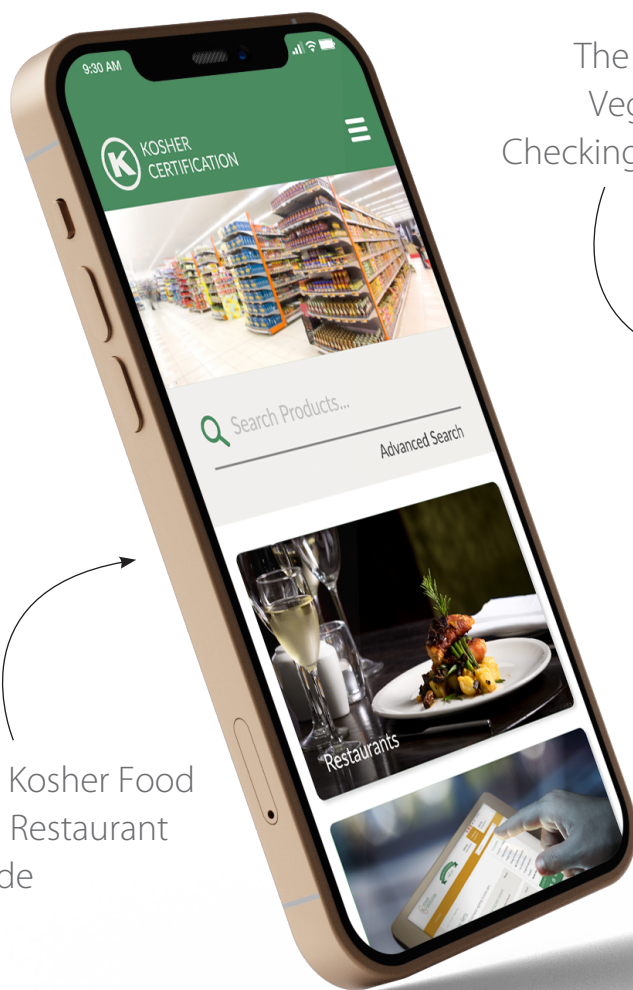
גובהה המינימלי של סוכה הינו עשרה טפחים (לפי רח"נ 80 ס"מ, ולפי החזו"א 96.6 ס"מ). במידה והדפנות הינן בגובה 10 טפחים (לפחות), אפשר להרחיק מהן את הסכך ולהגביהו לגובה הפרקטי הרצוי.

בניית הסוכה והשיבה בה

- מובא ברמ"א (אורח חיים סוף סימן תרכד) שהמדקדקים במצוות מתחילים בבניית הסוכה מיד במוצאי יום הכיפורים, וזאת כדי "לצאת ממצווה אל מצווה".
- מי שבכל זאת עושה דפנות מסדינים, ראוי שיחבר את הסדינים לקנים קשיחים ולוודא שהמרחק בין קנה לקנה לא יעלה על שלושה טפחים (לשיטת ר' חיים נאה 24 ס"מ ולפי החזון איש 28.8 ס"מ).
- שטחה המינימלי של סוכה הוא שבעה טפחים על שבעה טפחים (לפי רח"נ

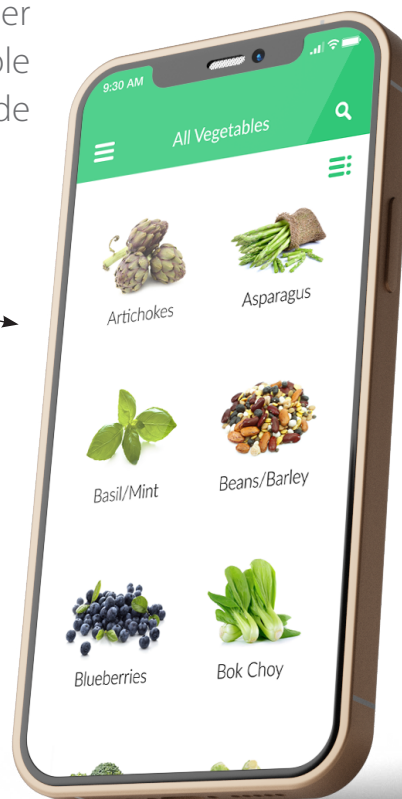


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