

K[®]OSHER SPIRiT

CERTIFIED SOUL NUTRITION

בס"ד
תשרי תשפ"ו
TISHREI 5786



KOSHER
without
compromise™

לשנה טובה ומתוקה

WISHING YOU A HAPPY,
HEALTHY & SWEET NEW YEAR



KOSHER SPIRIT



is dedicated to

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

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

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SOUL NUTRITION

By Rabbi Chaim Fogelman



photo credit: Marko Dasher

Dear Reader,

This year marks two significant milestones—both for the broader world of kashrus and for K Kosher.

Firstly, we commemorate 50 years since the Lubavitcher Rebbe initiated the Mivtza Kashrus campaign, one of the ten foundational mitzvah campaigns. This initiative inspired countless Jewish families to take meaningful steps toward

greater observance by embracing kosher dietary laws, kashering their kitchens, and committing to keeping kosher both at home and while traveling. This movement laid the groundwork for the long-running “Kosher Week” programs in supermarkets across the United States. For many years, the Machane Yisrael organization also supported these efforts by reimbursing families up to 50% (within a specified limit) for the purchase of new kosher kitchen utensils.

Secondly, this year marks the 90th anniversary of K Kosher Certification. Founded in 1935 by chemist Abraham Goldstein, who sought to elevate the standards of kosher food for the benefit of the kosher consumer, the K has grown tremendously under the leadership of Rabbi Berel Levy from the 1960s-1980s, and later, his son Rabbi Don Yoel Levy, OB" , from the 1980s until his untimely passing in 2020. Today, the K is recognized as one of the largest and most trusted kosher certification agencies in the world.*

Maintaining the rigorous standards established by Rabbi Berel and Rabbi Don Yoel Levy, K Kosher is proud to certify over 600,000 products globally. Our dedicated team of rabbis and professional staff conduct tens of thousands of unannounced plant and production inspections annually. Beyond certification, K Kosher is committed to education—publishing kashrus materials, and offering classes and lectures at our headquarters, in schools, camps, and advanced kashrus training programs.

It is my sincere hope and prayer that we may continue our work, with Hashem's help, and we remain steadfast in our mission to uphold the highest standards of kosher to provide transparent, reliable, and unwavering in our goal to provide —Kosher Without Compromise.

Wishing you a k'siva v'chasima tovah, shana tovah u'mesukah.

Rabbi Chaim Fogelman

Editor in Chief, K Kosher Executive Vaad HaKashrus

*Editor's Note:
See page 10
for more.

KOSHER SPIRIT Tishrei 5786

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Squash

Squash is a quintessential fall vegetable. It's hearty, versatile, and a great substitute for traditional carbohydrate-packed side dishes. Adding squash to your Sukkos seudahs is a tasty and easy way to add variety to your Yom Tov meals.

Summer squash, like zucchini and yellow squash, are high in beta-carotene, lutein, calcium, magnesium, zinc, and B, C, & K vitamins.

Winter squash are higher in fiber than summer squash and are packed with calcium, potassium, and vitamin A, as well as the vitamins and minerals found in summer squash.

PUMPKIN

Great for desserts, like pumpkin pie and as a healthy substitute for oil and eggs in baked goods.

Doesn't need to be peeled and has a very mild flavor when roasted.

DELICATA SQUASH

SPAGHETTI SQUASH

After roasting, shred with a fork and serve like traditional spaghetti.

A popular Japanese squash that is usually prepared by roasting in slices.

KABOCHA SQUASH

Makes a delicious side dish when roasted, either whole or in slices.

ZUCCHINI & YELLOW SQUASH

ACORN & BUTTERNUT SQUASH

Can be spiralized into salads, used in place of potatoes in kugel, or added to soups.



BY RABBI YAKOV TEICHMAN,
Ⓚ RABBINIC COORDINATOR

When you sit down to enjoy a meal at a restaurant or pick up a quick bite from your favorite takeout spot, you likely consider the menu, the flavors, and perhaps the ambiance—but have you ever paused to think about what goes on behind the scenes to ensure your food is kosher? In today's fast-paced society, convenience is key, and ready-to-eat (RTE) meals have become the norm. Instead of buying individual ingredients to prepare a salad at home, many opt for a pre-packaged salad bowl, complete with dressing and toppings. But what does it take to make that meal kosher? Enter the unsung hero of kosher food service—the mashgiach. What exactly does a mashgiach do each day in a restaurant or commissary kitchen? Or is he merely *משגיח מן החלונות*—watching from the windows?

The mashgiach is often the first to arrive at a kosher restaurant, quite literally holding the keys to the operation. Without the mashgiach, the staff has absolutely no access to the kitchen or food storage! His punctuality ensures that the staff can begin their work on time and that food preparation proceeds without delay. Upon arrival, the mashgiach checks that all areas which were locked overnight—such as refrigerators, freezers, stoves, gas lines, and outside storage units—are secure and in proper order. He

then clocks in to both the Ⓚ and the restaurant, confirming that he is present and on time for his shift.

There are multiple crucial kashrus zones at a restaurant that are under the purview of the mashgiach—Bishul Yisroel, Pas Yisroel, ingredient receiving, outgoing deliveries, and produce inspection.

BISHUL YISROEL

For most foods to be kosher, they must be Bishul Yisroel (cooked by a Jew). The exact foods that require Bishul Yisroel are extensive and beyond the scope of this article, but generally, they are foods that cannot be eaten raw and are fit to be served at a king's table.

One of the jobs of the mashgiach is to ensure these foods are Bishul Yisroel. There is a well-known machlokes between the Mechaber and Rema regarding the extent of the Jew's involvement in the cooking process. According to the Mechaber, the Jew must actually put the food on the fire. This is referred to as Bishul Beis Yosef and is the common practice among Sephardim. The Rema posits that it's enough for the Jew to turn on the fire, and this is the ruling followed by Ashkenazim. If food that requires



LIFE OF AN SERVICE GIACH

Bishul Yisroel is not made with Jewish involvement, it is Halachically non-kosher, and keilim need to be kashered.

Most kosher certification agencies follow the Halachic rulings of the Rema, while offering the option to request Bishul Beis Yosef for those who require it. To ensure all food meets the required standard of Bishul Yisroel, one of the mashgiach's first responsibilities each day is to ignite all cooking equipment—stove burners, ovens, and soup kettles. He must be the one to initiate the cooking process.

Throughout the day, he also monitors these fires to ensure they remain lit. For instance, if a soup pot boils over and extinguishes the flame, it is the mashgiach—not the kitchen staff—who must reignite it. While employees are trained never to turn on the flames themselves, the pressure of a busy lunch or dinner rush can lead to lapses. It's the mashgiach's job to maintain that boundary and uphold the standard.

Additionally, if a customer specifically requests Bishul Beis Yosef, the mashgiach must personally place that item—such as a burger—on the fire to fulfill the requirement.

PAS YISROEL

Pas Yisroel—baked goods that are prepared with Jewish involvement—is slightly different from Bishul Yisroel. While non-Pas Yisroel does not make an item non-kosher, many individuals are machmir in this area and will only eat bread or baked goods that are Pas Yisroel.

To make baked goods Pas Yisroel, Halachic authorities agree that a Jew must ignite the flame used in the baking process. In restaurants, however, many baked goods and bread products are sourced from outside vendors. This means the mashgiach must carefully verify that all such items are indeed Pas Yisroel. In commercial production, this often involves checking for a specific Pas Yisroel sticker or lot number on each delivered box. If even one box out of a shipment is missing the sticker, the mashgiach must investigate—checking if the sticker simply fell off, got stuck to another box, or if the item came from a non-Pas Yisroel production run.

There is also a lesser-known Halacha that adds complexity: If a Jew owns the establishment, then the leniency of pas palter (baked goods made by a non-Jewish professional baker) may not apply. In such cases, if a non-Jewish employee lights the oven or places food like pizza into the

CHECKING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR INSECTS REQUIRES PRECISION, PATIENCE, AND UNWAVERING ATTENTION TO DETAIL.



oven (especially if there's no pilot light or it was off), the product could be considered non-kosher—just like with bishul akum. While there are certain leniencies outlined by Rav Moshe Feinstein ztz"l, these are applied only under specific circumstances and require consultation with a posek.

INCOMING DELIVERIES

One of the fundamental principles of keeping kosher is starting with kosher ingredients. It sounds simple—but in a busy restaurant, this requires constant vigilance. Deliveries arrive in all forms: some are dropped off before dawn (as early as 5:00 AM), others show up during peak kitchen hours, and sometimes, if a key ingredient is missing, a staff member may run out to purchase it locally. In every case, the mashgiach must verify that each item meets the kosher standards of the establishment. Kosher supervision isn't just about ingredients—it's about awareness, timing, and preventing mix-ups before they happen.

OUTGOING DELIVERIES

The next step is to ensure the kosher consumer gets their food in a way that clearly shows that it is kosher. This means ensuring all deliveries are completely sealed with kosher tape when they leave the restaurant.

PRODUCE INSPECTION

Last but certainly not least is produce inspection, one of the most demanding and time-consuming responsibilities of the mashgiach. Checking fruits and vegetables for insects requires precision, patience, and unwavering attention to detail. It's not just about glancing at a head of lettuce; it's a careful, methodical process that ensures the produce

meets the highest kosher standards. Many places even have two mashgichim, and one is exclusively responsible for checking produce early in the morning.

But the mashgiach doesn't have the luxury of focusing on just one task. While he's elbow-deep in leafy greens, a delivery of meat might arrive that needs immediate inspection. At the same time, a soup pot may boil over, requiring him to relight the flame. The cashier may be waiting for his signature to release a new order, and meanwhile, a customer who ordered a salad 20 minutes ago is growing impatient.

It goes without saying that the mashgiach is proactive and will prepare all the vegetables required for that day's service in the morning before service time, but sometimes the vegetable delivery is delayed or there is an unexpected order for another 100 salads.

MISCELLANEOUS

And then there are all the other things that keep a kosher restaurant running: cracking and checking eggs, ensuring there is proper separation and segregation between fish and meat, sprinkling salt on leftover eggs or cut onions at the end of the day, and, of course, properly sealing and locking down the kitchen before closing.

This juggling act is part of the daily reality in a kosher kitchen. Behind every kosher meal is a mashgiach working hard to ensure that every standard is upheld—quietly, diligently, and often under great pressure. So next time you are in a restaurant and see the mashgiach, smile at him and say thank you. A little acknowledgement goes a long way. 🕒

What's the Brocha?

Leishev ba'Sukkah



By Rabbi Sholom
Ber Lepkivker
Rabbinic
Coordinator

It is a mitzvah to dwell in a sukkah on Sukkos; therefore, we recite the brocha of *leishev ba'sukkah* when we fulfill the mitzvah. When we dwell in the sukkah, we should have in mind that Hashem commanded us to sit in a sukkah to commemorate how Hashem surrounded us with clouds during Yetzias Mitzrayim.

The primary way of fulfilling the mitzvah of dwelling in the sukkah is by eating a seudah with bread or mezonos foods², so the brocha of *leishev ba'sukkah* is recited along with the brocha on the food. There are other ways to fulfill the mitzvah of living in a sukkah in the same fashion as one would in their own home, so other activities that are usually done at home are also included in the mitzvah. Some examples are: spending time in the sukkah learning or having a significant drink, like wine.

Where to Build a Sukkah

A kosher sukkah must belong to the owner, or be gifted to him, so when building the sukkah, one should build it on his own property or in an area where he was permitted to build. If the sukkah was built in a public area (like on the sidewalk) **without receiving permission** to do so, one cannot recite the brocha of *leishev ba'sukkah*, although the mitzvah of sukkah was fulfilled b'dieved.³

Using the Same Sukkah Throughout the Day

The brocha of *leishev ba'sukkah* is specific to the sukkah one is

currently using. Once the brocha was recited along with the brocha on food⁴, the brocha is not recited when relaxing, sleeping, or drinking in the sukkah for the entire day, as all other activities (even past and future ones) are included in the brocha on the meal. Even if one has a second meal, there is no need to make the brocha again if one stayed inside the sukkah or left only for a short period of time (about an hour or two), having in mind to return.

If, however, one leaves the sukkah for a long time or without planning to return, they should recite the brocha of *leishev ba'sukkah* on another meal (*not on a drink or relaxing* in the sukkah, as they are still included in the initial brocha from earlier in the day).

Going to a Different Sukkah

If one leaves a sukkah and continues eating in a different sukkah, or even if he goes there just to relax (without eating), according to the basic Halacha, he should recite the brocha of *leishev ba'sukkah* again.⁵ It is a common practice to eat a *k'beitza* of mezonos and make the brocha of *leishev ba'sukkah* while having in mind to include all other activities in the sukkah, as "relaxing" is not clearly defined.

There is a disagreement regarding the requirement to recite the brocha of *leishev ba'sukkah* on significant drinks.⁶ This is also why some do not say the brocha of *leishev ba'sukkah* during Havdalah, although the

prevalent custom is to say the brocha.⁷

If One Forgot to Say the Brocha

If one forgot to say *leishev ba'sukkah* until after one finished the meal, one may recite the brocha while still sitting in the sukkah, as it is also a part of the mitzvah.⁸

Kiddush

At the Yom Tov and Shabbos night seudos, the brocha of *leishev ba'sukkah* is recited on wine directly after Kiddush because the holiday of Sukkos and the mitzvah of sitting in the sukkah are mentioned during Kiddush. On the first night of Sukkos the brocha of *leishev ba'sukkah* comes before shehechyanu, because we say shehechyanu over both the Yom Tov and over the mitzvah of sukkah. On the second night, we say shehechyanu before *leishev ba'sukkah* since shehechyanu is only over the Yom Tov, not the sukkah.⁹ During the day Kiddush (on Yom Tov and Shabbos), many recite *leishev ba'sukkah* after Kiddush¹⁰, which is the custom of Chabad and others, while some say it after hamotzi. During all other times, it is recited immediately after hamotzi or mezonos¹¹, as the meal is the main part of the mitzvah.¹²

The prevalent custom is to recite the brocha of *leishev ba'sukkah* while sitting. However, those who say Kiddush while standing may say it while standing as both ways are permitted.¹³

1 שו"ע הרב תרכ"ה ס"א
2 שם תרל"ט ס"א ו"ב
3 ג או"ח תרל"ז ס"א שם
4 שם
5 שם ס"א י"ד ט"ו
6 שם ס"א ט"ו

7 לוח א"י, ר"מ טוקצ'נסקי
8 שם ס"א ט"ז
9 שם ס"א תרמ"ג ס"א. וראה בסידור ע"א
10 Sefer HaMinhagim, Reshimus
11 שם ס"א ד'
12 שם ס"א ג'

13 שם ס"א תרמ"ג ס"ב

החשש מפני טפילים ושרצים

בקהילות רבות נהוג לאכול בראש השנה ראש של דג לסימן "שנהיה לראש ולא לזנב", ושנוזה "לפרות ולרבות כדגים". בהקשר זה ראוי לציין כי במי הים מצויים לעיתים טפילים ושרצים שונים הנצמדים לעור הדג ואף חודרים לתוכו יחד עם המים. לפיכך יש לנקות את ראשי הדגים - דוגמת סלמון ולבֶּרֶק - הגדלים בים או בבריכות שאינן מטופלות.


הניקיון צריך להיעשות לפני הבישול. בתהליך הניקוי יש לגרד בעזרת סכין את העור החיצוני, לחתוך את ראש הדג לרוחבו, ולהסיר (עם סכין) את הזימים. הזימים משמשים מעין פילטר טבעי למערכת הנשימה של הדג, והם עלולים להכיל טפילים או שרצים שמקורם במי הים.

כאשר הדג לא נוקה מבעוד מועד וקיים לגביו חשש של הימצאות חרקים, ניתן להניח את ראש הדג על השולחן, לסימן ("שנהיה לראש ולא לזנב") בלבד. אך אין לאכול ראש דג שיש בו חשש להימצאות חרקים.

"דבש וחלב תחת לשונך"

התורה נמשלה לדבש, כנאמר (שיר השירים ד, יא), "דבש וחלב תחת לשונך". בעומדנו בפתחה של השנה החדשה, אי אפשר שלא להיזכר בהנהגתו התורנית וההלכתית, המתוקה מדבש, של נשיא ועד הכשרות או קיי הרה"ג דן יואל ליווי זצ"ל, אשר הדריך וחינך באהבת תורה וביראת שמים דורות של תלמידים יראי שמים תלמידי חכמים ומומחי כשרות. דרכו בלימוד התורה ובהנהגה הייתה לתת מענה הלכתי מנומק לכל שאלה שעלתה מהשטח, כמו גם לנושאים חדשים שהתעוררו עם התפתחות טכנולוגית המזון, עליהם אין התייחסות מפורשת בפוסקי ההלכה מהדורות הקודמים. חסרונם מורגש בכל שאלה הלכתית העומדת על הפרק.

זכותו תגן עלינו, שנוזה כולנו ל"שנה

טובה ומתוקה!" 

ה'סימנים' משלבים שלושה רבדים בבקשה ותפילה: מחשבה - כוונת הלב, דיבור - אמירת נוסח "יהי רצון", ומעשה - אחיזת ה'סימנים' ביד וכמובן אכילתם. לאור זאת אין מדובר כאן בהימנעות ממעשה מחמת 'סימן' (כדרך ה'מנחשים'), אלא בהבעת תפילה ובקשה.

כך גם לגבי מנהג ה'כפרות' ויתר המנהגים שנהגו קהילות ישראל ב'הבדלה' על הכוס במוצאי שבת ושאר כיוצא באלו - כולם הם ביטויי תפילה ובקשה, ולא 'ניחוש' חלילה.

ההבחנה של המהרש"א

המהרש"א (במסכת הוריות יב,א) עורך הבחנה שונה מעט בין 'ניחוש' ל'סימן'. את דבריו הוא מבסס על הכלל שאין הקב"ה מבטל גזרה טובה שגזר, בעוד גזרה רעה שנגזרה על ידו, יכול האדם לבטלה על ידי תשובה ותפילה. לאור זאת קובע המהרש"א, כי סימן טוב הרי הוא ראוי, שכן הטוב בא מאיתו יתברך, ודבר טוב שיצא מפי הקב"ה אינו מתבטל. לעומת זאת, סימן רע איננו וודאי, שהרי גזרות רעות ניתן לבטל על ידי שעושים תשובה ומעוררים רחמים, כנאמר בנבואת ירמיהו (פרק כו פסוק יג): וְעַתָּה, הִיטִיבוּ דְרָכֵיכֶם וּמַעַלְלֵיכֶם, וְשִׁמְעוּ, בְּקוֹל ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, וְיָנַחַם ה' אֶל הָרָעָה, אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר עֲלֵיכֶם. ולפיכך רק 'סימן' רע הוא בגדר "לא תנחשו".

סוגיה רחבה עם ריבוי פרשנויות

במאמר זה נגענו רק 'על קצה המזלג' בסוגיית האיסור "לא תנחשו", ובפרט ביחס ל'סימנים' של ראש השנה - בהם לכל הדעות אין אפילו חשש של איסור. עם זאת, בסוגיה זו מצויות פרשנויות נוספות של פוסקי ההלכה.

במקרים מסוימים מתעוררות שאלות הלכתיות מורכבות והיבטים ההלכתיים שונים ואף מחלוקות בין גדולי הפוסקים. כך, לדוגמה, במאמר הגמרא במסכת חולין (צה,ב): "כל נחש שאינו כאליעזר עבד אברהם וכיוצא בן שאול, אינו נחש". בביאור מאמר זה נחלקו הרמב"ם והראב"ד בפסיקת ההלכה מה נכלל בגדר האיסור "לא תנחשו". נושא זה הינו רחב וקצרה יריעתנו מלהקיפו בשלמותו.

השנה תפוחים אדומים וכן בפרוונצא אוכלין ענבים לבנים ותאנים לבנות וראש כבש. כל דבר חדש וקל וטוב - לסימן טוב לכל ישראל.

בין 'סימן' ל'ניחוש'

פרשני התלמוד עוד מתקופת הגאונים' ועד לפוסקי ההלכה מה'אחרונים', נתנו הסברים שונים בהגדרת ההבדל שבין 'ניחוש' האסור, ל'סימן' המותר. בספר 'תשובות הגאונים' (הלכות ראש השנה תשובות י,יא) ישנה התייחסות לנושא זה בשם רב נטרונאי גאון, וזה לשונו: "שחקרתם שאנו רגילים ליקח ראשי כבשים בראש השנה ולאכול, ולשחוט כל אחד ואחד תרגולים בערב יום הכפורים [מנהג הכפרות]. ובמוצאי שבת... מוסיפים מעט מים לכוס של הבדלה, ושותה וחוזר ושופך, ששאלתם לפרש לכם".

ומבאר שם: "דבר זה נחש [ניחוש] לטובה הוא, וחכמים ורוב אנשי בבל כך רגילין לעשות, שבערב ראש השנה לוקחין בשר או ראשים של צאן ומבשלין אותם... בדבר של מתיקה, ואין מבשלין בישול שיש בו חומץ, ואומרים: נאכל מיני מתיקה ובשר ובישול שֶׁמֶן, כדי שתהא שנה כולה מתוקה וערבה ולא יהא בה דבר רע".

וכמו כן בתשובת רב האי גאון (שם, תשובה י) ביאר שבכל התחלה חדשה ראוי לאכול אוכל מתוק ושמן, לסימן טוב, ושזהו מנהג חכמים. ומביא לכך ראיות מן המקרא: הכתרת שלמה המלך בסמיכות למעיין לסימן שתימשך מלכותו. ונבואת ירמיהו ב"מַלְאךְ שְׂקֵד" - לסימן "כי שוקד אני על דברי לעשותו", ועוד.

העולה מתשובות הגאונים, כי אם אירע לאדם מקרה (לדוגמה, "פיתו נפלה מפיו") והוא רואה בו סימן מבשר רע, וכתוצאה מכך הוא נמנע מעשיית עסקים או מכל פעולה אחרת באותו היום - הרי זה בכלל 'ניחוש' שאיסורו מן התורה. אולם פעולה אקטיבית הנעשית במכוון - כדוגמת המנהג להניח ראש איל על השולחן בראש השנה לזכר עקידת יצחק, או אכילת מאכלים מתוקים כסימן לשנה טובה וערבה - אינה נכללת באיסור 'ניחוש'. שכן, כאמור, מטרת הסימנים הללו היא לבטא תפילה ובקשה מלפני ה', שיחדש עלינו שנה טובה ומתוקה.



הרב שלמה חיים הלוי וינפלד
חבר ועד הכשרות

שנהיה לראש

הקובעת כי כאשר ממליכים מלך חדש, יש למשוך אותו בשמן סמוך למעיין - לסימן טוב שתימשך מלכותו כמעין שאינו פוסק. וכפי שביקש דוד המלך מצדוק הכהן ומנתן הנביא למשוך את שלמה בנו סמוך למעיין הגיחון בירושלם (כמסופר בספר מלכים א, פרק א). ובלשון הברייתא: "אין מושחין את המלכים אלא על המעיין, כדי שתימשך מלכותו".

בהקשר לכך מביאה הגמרא כמה דוגמאות ל'סימנים' שלפיהם ניתן לדעת האם העתיד יהיה חיובי. ובמסקנת הדברים אומר אביי, שמדברי הגמרא הנ"ל עולה, שיש משמעות ל'סימנים'. לפיכך יהא רגיל אדם לאכול (ויש הגורסים בגמרא "למחזי" כלומר לראות) בראש השנה 'קָא' [דלעת] ו'רופְיָא' [תלתן] ופרתי [כרישה], וסילקא [תרד] ותמרי [תמרים]. שכן מקצת המאכלים הללו גדלים מהר וזהו סימן לברכה, ומקצתם מתוקים שזה סימן לשנה טובה ומתוקה.

ב'מחזור ויטרי' הלכות ראש השנה (סעיף שכג) הגירסה היא "למחזי", כלומר לראות את הסימנים. אך הוסיף שם, שמכאן נהגו בני צרפת לאכול בראש

ועה עם "לא תנחשו" ו"תצנים תהיה"?

בספר ויקרא (יט, כו) נאמר, "לא תנחשו". והגמרא (סנהדרין סה, ב) מבארת, שאסור לנחש עתידות על פי סימנים למיניהם. לדוגמה: אם נפלה פיתו מפיו - אין לראות בכך סימן שלא תהיה לו ברכה באותו היום ולהימנע מעשיית עסקים או מיציאה לדרך.

הגמרא מוסיפה ומציינת מספר דוגמאות נוספות ("מקלו נפל מידו", "עורב קורא לו" וכיוצא בזה) ומבהירה כי על כל אלה חל איסור "לא תנחשו". כך גם נפסק ב'שולחן ערוך' (חלק יורה דעה, סימן קעט) להלכה.

לאור זאת נשאלת אפוא השאלה, כיצד הנהיגו חז"ל לאכול 'סימנים' הצופים ומסמלים את עתיד השנה החדשה; האם אין בכך עבירה על איסור "לא תנחשו" וכן על ציווי התורה "תמים תהיה עם ה' אלוהיך"?

'סימנים' כתפילה ובבקשה

סוגיה זו נדונה כבר בגמרא במסכת כריתות (ה, ב; ו, א), שם הובאה ברייתא

כתב הטור (וכן ב'שולחן ערוך' חלק אורח חיים, סימן תקפג), שנהגו בליל ראש השנה לאכול בשעת הסעודה ראש כבש. והרב רבי מאיר מרוטנבורג (מגדולי הראשונים, מרבותיהם של הרא"ש והמרדכי ומאחרוני בעלי התוספות) היה רגיל לאכול בראש השנה ראש של איל - זכר לאילו של יצחק ולסימן "שנהיה לראש ולא לזנב".

ב'הגהות אשרי' על הרא"ש (מסכת ראש השנה פרק א, סימן ה) הביא את דברי הגמרא (ראש השנה טז, א) "אמר הקב"ה תקעו לפניי בשופר של איל כדי שאזכור לכם עקידת יצחק", ומוסיף: "ואנו רגילין לאכול ראש של איל ומטבילים את הראש בדבש - לסימן 'שתחדש עלינו שנה מתוקה'".

על דרך זה נוהגים בקהילות ישראל לאכול דברים המסמלים את חידוש השנה לטובה: רימון - לסימן "שירבו זכויותינו כרימון"; לטבול את פרוסת החלה בדבש - לסימן שנזכה "לשנה טובה ומתוקה", ועל שם הנאמר (נחמיה ח, ט) על ראש השנה, "לָכוּ אֲכָלוּ מִשְׁמָנִים וּשְׁתוּ מִמַּתְקִים וְשָׁלְחוּ מִנּוֹת לְאִין נֶכֶן לוֹ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ הַיּוֹם לְאֲדֹנָינוּ".



From a
Chemist's
Bench to
a Global
Standard



By Rabbi Eli Lando, Executive Manager

Our story began in 1935, when kosher certification was limited, inconsistent, and often difficult to access. Ninety years later, the world and the food you eat looks very different. Today, kosher-certified products are more available and diverse than ever before, spanning every aisle of the supermarket and reaching almost every corner of the globe.

Your *Cholov Yisroel* yogurt was cultured using bacteria from Wisconsin. The spices in your kugel? Grown and processed in India. The chocolate in your cake started as beans in West Africa, passed through Europe, and ended up in your kitchen. Your Yom Tov wine may have come from Israel, France, Australia, or South Africa. The sparkle in your lemonade was fermented in Italy, blended in Florida, and bottled in New Jersey. And this is just a sample. There are so many more products, processes, and places all connected by one quiet, encircled symbol: the © symbol.

That symbol now appears on over half a million products made in close to one hundred countries. In fact, many products certified by other agencies likely contain at least one sub-ingredient certified by © Kosher. A global effort to make kosher observance consistent, accessible, and—above all—trustworthy did not happen on its own.

A Chemist's Vision: 1935

This story begins in 1935, when a young food chemist named **Avraham Goldstein** recognized that modern food processing had outpaced the ability of traditional rabbinic supervision. Ingredient panels were vague, and factory-made additives defied simple classification.

So, he founded **Organized Kashrus Laboratories**, introducing laboratory-based kosher certification. With test tubes and titration charts, he examined ingredients at the molecular level and published his findings in the *Kosher Food Guide*. It was the first time families had both scientific and Halachic assurance that the foods they brought into their homes were truly kosher.

Supervision Takes Flight: 1965

By the 1960s, the world of food had changed again. The supply chain was now global: a single juice concentrate could combine fruit from South America, stabilizers from Europe, and preservatives from Asia.

Rabbi Berel (Bernard) Levy, a Lubavitcher chossid, *talmid chochom* and strategic thinker, got involved and assumed ownership. He understood what the moment demanded: supervision had to leave the lab and go directly to the source.

Rabbi Berel Levy inspecting a fishing operation.



Ⓚ Kosher was one of the first agencies to move beyond paper-based supervision and insist on on-site inspections. This included visits to production plants around the world at a time when few others did so. This proactive approach set a new global standard for kosher oversight. Rabbi Levy flew cargo flights to Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, China, and beyond—personally inspecting production lines, storage tanks, and raw materials. He did not rely on documents or second-hand assurances; if something was certified as kosher, he needed to see it for himself.

Under his leadership, regional hashgachos were unified under a single global Ⓚ symbol, and previously overlooked additives like MSG and ascorbic acid came under full kosher supervision. Thanks to Rabbi Berel Levy, other certifications also began making site visits instead of relying solely on statements or ingredient panels.

The Structure That Lasted: Rabbi Don Yoel Levy (1987–2020)

After Rabbi Berel's passing in 1987, his son **Rabbi Don Yoel Levy** took the

frameworks became the foundation of kosher supervision as we know it today.

He led Ⓚ Kosher into the digital age, building proprietary tracking systems, implementing tools to monitor product formulas, and creating structured documentation for every inspection. He also hired and trained Rabbinic Coordinators in the office and mashgichim in the field, transforming the Ⓚ from a basement operation into a global headquarters in New York with affiliated offices and representatives worldwide.

He insisted that:

- Every visit by a mashgiach or Rabbinic Coordinator is documented in full.
- Every new facility undergoes firsthand review, with certification only granted after proper peer reviews.
- Every product bearing the Ⓚ symbol is produced in a facility personally visited and inspected by a qualified Ⓚ representative. Ⓚ verifies every production site ourselves.

helm. Having already spent a decade at the Ⓚ, Rabbi Don Yoel brought deep Halachic knowledge, technical precision, and a visionary approach to kashrus — a vision realized through the systems and protocols he developed to ensure compliance. These

- Rigorous systems ensure acceptance of certificates for ingredients used in Ⓚ-certified products—an article in itself.

His Halachic rulings were always guided by the *Poskim* he trusted; he leaned toward stringency when needed, never toward leniency for convenience.

From 2010 until his untimely passing in 2020, I had the zechus to work directly with Rabbi Don Yoel Levy. I witnessed how he built not just a system but a culture—one of trust, discipline, and unshakable *yiras Shomayim*. His expectations were high because they were always rooted in Torah and integrity.

Torah Before Anything

To those who worked closely with him, one thing stood out above all:

His greatest passion was Torah.

Whether we were in New York on a regular day, at a steaming plant in China, or in a high-level meeting in Europe, the day began with learning. We had a daily Gemara shiur, no matter where the job took us.

Close to his untimely passing, we had planned to begin learning *Yoreh Deah* together—the section of Halachah that forms the foundation of kosher supervision. Unfortunately, that never came to be, but in his

Rabbi Berel Levy at a certified facility





memory, we launched many initiatives in this realm.

Rabbi Don Yoel lived by this principle:

“Kashrus begins in the Beis Midrash, and only then reaches the factory floor.”

That principle still guides everything we do.



Rabbi Eli Lando and Rabbi Don Yoel Levy

Today: Led by a Vaad

After Rabbi Don Yoel’s passing, © Kosher appointed an Executive Rabbinical *Vaad*—a senior group of rabbonim and Rabbinic Coordinators who had worked closely with him. This Vaad now oversees all certifications, approves new facilities, and maintains consistent Halachic standards across our worldwide offices. They have protected and built on the standards set by Rabbi Don Yoel Levy, ensuring we improve and learn from every experience.

Whether it’s our Brooklyn headquarters or our teams in Europe, Asia-Pacific, Latin America—or anywhere else, every report is reviewed, and every ingredient source is tracked with full documentation.

The Mission Remains The Same:

To go from good to great. A kashrus agency’s primary responsibility is to uphold Halacha and answer to Hashem—and in doing so, it must also carefully balance its obligations to the consumer, the certified company, and its own reputation. When these responsibilities seem to conflict, the agency must prioritize transparency, integrity, and public trust—never putting its own interests first. © Kosher Certification emphasizes this hierarchy of values, striving for constant improvement and accountability in our kashrus standards.

Fifty Years of Mivtza Kashrus

Celebrating a Shared Mission: 90 Years of © Kosher and 50 Years of the Rebbe’s Call

This year marks a double milestone: the 90th anniversary of © Kosher and fifty years since the Lubavitcher Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson זצ”ל—called for a new mitzvah campaign: encouraging Jewish people to kosher their kitchens and commit to eating kosher food. The Rebbe quoted the teaching in Tanya that a person is affected by the food he or she eats, on both physical and spiritual levels. The Rebbe went on to explain that consuming non-kosher food can cloud the natural purity and innocence



Rabbi Don Yoel Levy with The Rebbe

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that a person is born with, allowing a person to potentially adopt views that are in opposition to Torah.

This effort became known as **Mivtza Kashrus**—a campaign that emphasized kosher observance as a core commitment of Jewish life.

When Rabbi Don Yoel Levy was a young man, he was deeply immersed in kollel in Eretz Yisroel, fully dedicated to Torah learning. At the time, his father, Rabbi Berel Levy, was leading the rapidly growing operations of © Kosher and felt the need for help. Unsure if it was appropriate to involve his son, Rabbi Berel turned to the Lubavitcher Rebbe for guidance: **Should his son leave kollel in Eretz Yisroel to assist him in the growing responsibilities of kosher certification at © Kosher?**

The Rebbe responded with a powerful question: **“Why take him away from his studies?”**

Time passed, and the demands of © Kosher only increased. Rabbi Berel once again asked the Rebbe—this time whether he should bring in a partner to help. The Rebbe’s answer was clear and direct: **“Bring in your son.”**

This was a turning point. The Rebbe was no longer just permitting it—he was entrusting Rabbi Don Yoel with a mission.

Still, Rabbi Don Yoel longed to

serve as a formal shaliach of the Rebbe. In a personal *yechidus*, he expressed this desire. The Rebbe's response reframed everything: **"Promoting kosher is also spreading Yiddishkeit."**

With those words, the Rebbe elevated the work of kosher certification. It wasn't merely technical oversight—it was *shlichus*. A way to bring Yiddishkeit into homes, factories, and lives across the world. The Rebbe specifically instructed: **"Go into the world of kosher and make repairs."**

This wasn't just a job, it was a calling. A mission to strengthen kashrus, raise standards, and repair what needed fixing in the world of kosher observance.

For Rabbi Don Yoel Levy, kosher



Ⓚ Rabbis inspecting a beverage facility

certification was never a career—it was *Avodas HaKodesh*. Guided by the Rebbe's words, he approached every aspect of his work with a deep sense of responsibility, knowing that every decision carried spiritual weight. And that sense of purpose was contagious—we who worked with him felt it, lived it, and strive to emulate it every day.

So, it is only fitting that this

year—**90 years since Ⓚ Kosher's founding and 50 years since the launch of Mivtza Kashrus**—we recognize how intertwined those milestones truly are.

Kashrus shapes Jewish homes, strengthens Jewish families, and safeguards Jewish values. We are honored to support and further this initiative—in so many ways, in so many places. And we remain committed to the Rebbe's vision: that kosher is not just a label—it's a lifeline.

What's Next?

We're already building the future. Soon, consumers will be able to trace product information in real time, and kosher education will be more accessible than ever. But no matter what changes AI or new technology may introduce, some things will never change:

- **There will always be a mashgiach on-site.**
- **There will always be a Halachic review.**

Learn More, Stay Connected

We encourage every kosher consumer to deepen their observance:

- **Learn the Halachos.** Excellent

programs are available for both men and women.

- **Review regularly.** Just as doctors attend continuing education to maintain their licenses, semicha is only the beginning, upholding high standards requires regular refreshers.
- **Appreciate the people** behind the labels. Every trusted hechsher stands on the shoulders of dedicated mashgichim and rabbinic leadership.

To support that growth, Ⓚ Kosher recently launched **Kosher Connect** — a monthly digital resource featuring:

- **Timely Halachic insights**
- **Real-time tola'im updates**
- **Consumer hotline Q&A**
- **Alerts on new kosher products**

Subscribe today by emailing connect@ok.org.

Because when you understand what's behind the label, your food doesn't just stay kosher, it becomes part of your avodah. At Ⓚ Kosher we're always moving forward, one product at a time, one inspection at a time, working to make the world a better, more kosher place. Ⓚ



Rabbi Don Yoel Levy *DEM*, Rabbi Chaim Fogelman, Rabbi Yeshaya Prizant, and Rabbi Yitzchok Rosenfeld inspecting a certified facility



NO MIXER Honey Cake

DRY INGREDIENTS:

3 ½ cups flour

1 ½ cups sugar

½ cup brown sugar

1 tbsp baking powder

1 tsp baking soda

½ tsp salt

1 tbsp + 1 tsp cinnamon

WET INGREDIENTS:

1 cup oil

1 cup honey

3 large eggs

1 cup prepared coffee, cooled

½ cup orange juice

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Mix all the dry ingredients together in a bowl.
3. Add wet ingredients and mix with a whisk until smooth and no lumps are left.
4. Grease a Bundt pan and pour in the batter. Bake for 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. When baked in a loaf pan, the cake will take about 40 minutes. Times will vary depending on size of pan used.

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Understanding Glycerin

in Uncertified Non-Food Products



By Rabbi Elisha Rubin,
Ⓢ Rabbinic Coordinator
Specializing in Ingredients

It is always preferable to use products with a reliable hechsher. If there is a great need for a product that contains glycerin and no kosher-certified product is available, a Rav can use the information presented here to render a Halachic decision.

A recent development involving the production of a liquid medication containing kosher-certified glycerin has prompted renewed discussion—and concern—about the potential presence of non-kosher glycerin in various products, particularly medicines. As someone who has closely followed this issue in the context of my kashrus work, I would like to share insights that can help provide clarity.¹

Glycerin: What It Is and Where It Comes From

Glycerin (also known as glycerol) can be produced in one of two primary ways:

1. **Synthetically**, from petrochemicals² – this type is inherently kosher³.

¹ My impressions have been confirmed by many other kashrus professionals as well, but it should be understood that the global glycerin market is so huge and affected by various changing factors that Rabbonim will also need to consider that this is only a strongly developed impression.

² The same gasoline that runs your car.

³ Unless it was processed on equipment used for non-kosher items.



2. **From natural fats and oils**⁴ – the kosher status depends on the source, which could be vegetable oil (kosher) or animal fat (potentially non-kosher), as well as the kosher status of the production equipment.

Historically, glycerin was a byproduct of soap production, often made from animal fat. At the time, kosher glycerin was considered a premium product and was notably more expensive. It commanded a higher price due to its appeal among kosher consumers, vegans, and those concerned about BSE (mad cow disease), though understandably, not all buyers were willing to pay the premium. However, over the past few decades, there have been significant changes in the global glycerin market:

⁴ Fat/oil is otherwise known as a “triglyceride” which means it is glycerin with three fatty acids attached. Different fats have different fatty acids attached, which is what differentiates them. Various industries remove the fatty acids for different functional purposes, leaving glycerin as a byproduct.

Today, most food and pharmaceutical-grade glycerin is kosher and vegetable-derived.

Synthetic glycerin, once common, has become too costly to produce on a large scale and is now mainly reserved for specialty applications. In 2005, Dow closed its glycerin production facility in Freeport, TX, as the precursor chemical, epichlorohydrin⁵, had become more expensive than the glycerin being produced from it. Today, epichlorohydrin is often derived from glycerin itself. While synthetic glycerin still exists, it is now limited to high-end specialty applications such as advanced electronics, pharmaceuticals, and specialty chemicals.

- In response to rising petroleum prices—and driven by substantial government subsidies aimed at promoting

⁵ A chemical most used to make plastics and other polymers. Floculants are also made from it.

environmentally friendly “renewable” alternatives, there has been a dramatic surge in the **biodiesel industry**.

Biodiesel is produced by combining methanol with fat or oil, resulting in a substance called methyl ester, which is suitable for use as diesel fuel. Since only the fatty acids are utilized in this process, glycerin is left behind as a byproduct. One of the key advantages of biodiesel is its ability to utilize waste oils, such as used cooking oil, the kind often seen in drums behind restaurants. It can also be made from animal fats⁶, though in practice, the vast majority is derived from virgin vegetable oils. In the Far East, numerous large-scale manufacturers produce biodiesel in massive quantities from palm or coconut oil, while in the U.S., Europe, and South America, soy, rapeseed, and other locally available vegetable oils are commonly used.

As a result, the market has experienced a significant surplus of inexpensive kosher glycerin, which has become the dominant source for both food-grade and pharmaceutical-grade glycerin worldwide.

⁶ Used cooking oil is increasingly a source, especially in Europe, and from petrochemical companies looking to boost their renewable credentials. It is still a distinct minority, and the byproduct glycerin is unlikely to be refined to pharmaceutical grade.

Large manufacturers—including industry leaders—have transitioned to producing exclusively kosher vegetable-based glycerin. As a result, kosher glycerin has become widely available and affordable, with most global food-grade glycerin now being kosher.

What This Means for the Consumer

While non-kosher glycerin still exists, it is used in industrial or technical applications (e.g., paint, road deicing, animal feed). According to my estimate, over 70% of global glycerin production is kosher. Of the remaining, less than 30%, which is non-kosher, very little is food grade. Food-grade, animal-derived glycerin is a niche product and difficult to source.⁷ Given this market reality, for any *new food or pharmaceutical product developed today, the likelihood of it containing non-kosher glycerin* is very low.⁸ However, in cases where a pharmaceutical company has used the same formulation for decades, including animal-derived glycerin, it may still be in use due to regulatory hurdles that make reformulation difficult and expensive.

While much of this information has been verified through professional contacts and industry sources, it is important to remember that the glycerin supply chain is vast, global, and dynamic. Rabbonim should evaluate each case individually based on the most up-to-date and reliable information.


In Summary

- **Flavors:** Many products containing glycerin also include flavors, which require kosher

While non-kosher glycerin still exists, the likelihood of it appearing in new food or medicine formulations is very low.

certification. While this article focuses on glycerin, uncertified flavors can pose their own kashrus concerns. In cases of medical necessity, we are generally lenient.⁹

- **Best practice:** Use products with reliable kosher certification, especially when glycerin and/or flavors are present.
- **Market reality:** Today, most food and pharmaceutical-grade glycerin is kosher and vegetable-derived.
- **Halachic flexibility:** In the absence of certified products, and especially in cases of medical necessity, Rabbonim can evaluate the situation based on current industry norms and data.
- **Consumer influence:** Continued consumer preference for certified products encourages manufacturers to maintain kosher standards.

As always, when in doubt, consult your Rav or a reputable kashrus agency. While the situation has improved significantly over the past 30 years, vigilance remains essential. We must continue to advocate for transparency, maintain awareness, and make informed choices. 

⁷ Internet “research” should never be confused with fact. My impressions and conclusions are based on my many years of paying attention to this issue in the context of my regular kashrus work.

⁸ As of the January 8, 2024, report from Oleoline (a company that tracks global oil and glycerin prices) in the US pharma grade kosher glycerin was selling for 38 cents a pound and pharma grade tallow glycerin was selling for 44 cents a pound (16% more!).

⁹ Zeh v’zeh gorem, rov, etc. For Pesach there are additional ingredients that can be potentially problematic. There too, there may be tzirufim to allow, though it is not as clear cut and worthy of a longer article.

A CLOSER LOOK: Sugar SUBSTITUTES



By Rabbi Sholom Ber Hendel,
Executive Vaad HaKashrus



WHAT ARE SUGAR SUBSTITUTES?

Sweeteners are used to add a sweet taste to all types of foods and beverages. Sweeteners fall into two main categories: nutritive sweeteners and non-nutritive sweeteners (also known as sugar substitutes).

Nutritive sweeteners provide calories and carbohydrates. Common examples include sugar, honey, maple syrup, corn syrup, and agave nectar.

In contrast, non-nutritive sweeteners provide sweetness without the calories and carbohydrates. These sugar substitutes – such as aspartame, sucralose, stevia, and monk fruit extract – are intensely sweet and only a small amount is needed to achieve the desired level of sweetness. They are used in diet sodas, desserts, baked goods, chewing gum, and many other products.

HOW ARE SUGAR SUBSTITUTES MADE?

AGAVE NECTAR:

One popular sugar substitute is agave nectar. Agave nectar is a nutritive sweetener, but it causes a slower and smaller rise in blood sugar levels compared to regular sugar due to its lower glycemic index. Since agave nectar is sweeter than sugar, a smaller amount can be used to achieve the same level of sweetness.

The first step in producing agave nectar is milling the agave pines. The fibers are washed with hot water and are then filtered to remove any solids. The juice goes through a heating and hydrolysis process to break down the syrup into simpler sugars. After this, the juice is filtered again and concentrated through evaporation to produce the final product.

STEVIA

Stevia is a popular natural non-nutritive sweetener that is typically derived from stevia leaves. The traditional production method includes harvesting the leaves, drying them, and then soaking them in water to extract the sweet component. The water is filtered, concentrated in an evaporator, and spray dried to make crude stevia.

The crude stevia is further purified by dissolving it in ethanol. After dissolving, it is cooled to crystallize the stevia, the alcohol is removed in a centrifuge, and the stevia is dried and milled. At this point, the stevia is ready to be used in food or beverages.

In addition to the traditional method, there are new methods that are used to improve the taste and increase the yield when making stevia. These include:

- Bioconversion – the stevia plant extract is modified with enzymes.
- Fermentation – microorganisms convert sugars (mixed with additional additives) into stevia. The final product is then purified and dried.

MONK FRUIT EXTRACT

Unlike stevia, which can sometimes leave a bitter aftertaste, monk fruit extract is less sweet but has a cleaner taste. Derived from monk fruit, native to Southeast Asia, it is a natural non-nutritive sweetener that is often harder to find and more expensive than stevia, which is widely available.

To get monk fruit extract, the monk fruit is harvested and dried. The dried monk fruit is crushed to extract the juice, and the juice is mixed with hot water to help



with the extraction process. The liquid is filtered and concentrated into a syrup that can be packed as is or further dried into a powder.

ASPARTAME (COMMONLY KNOWN AS NUTRASWEET OR EQUAL)

Another popular non-nutritive sugar substitute that is often used in diet drinks and products made through cold processes is Aspartame, which is 200 times sweeter than sugar.

Aspartame is produced by combining two amino acids: L-aspartic acid and L-phenylalanine. These amino acids are typically produced through fermentation. Microorganisms convert sugars (often with the help of additional additives) into the desired amino acids. Each amino acid is then modified with chemicals to ensure the correct reaction takes place when they are combined. The resulting aspartame is modified, purified, crystallized by cooling, and dried to produce this sweetener.

SUCRALOSE (COMMONLY KNOWN AS SPLENDA)

Unlike aspartame, sucralose is a non-nutritive substitute which is heat stable, making it a popular choice in low-calorie foods that are heated or baked. This sugar substitute is about 600 times sweeter than sugar. Sucralose is made through treating dissolved sugar with chemicals and chlorine, replacing three parts of the sugar molecule with chlorine. The resulting product is then purified, concentrated, crystallized, and dried.

This chemical modification gives sucralose a similar structure to sucrose but also prevents the body from metabolizing it for calories, as the body doesn't recognize it as a source of energy. As a result, sucralose provides a sweet taste without added calories.

ARE SUGAR SUBSTITUTES KOSHER?

While the main ingredients in both nutritive and non-nutritive sugar substitutes do not pose kashrus concerns, attention must be given to the processing aids and additives that are used in the process. These additional ingredients, whether introduced during manufacturing or added later to dilute the extremely sweet final products, need to be kosher certified. In addition, all additives need to be kosher for Passover to create a Passover certified sweetener.

In the case of aspartame, the amino acids used in its production are typically derived through a fermentation process that uses corn glucose as a base. Some hold that kitniyos that are processed to the point of molecular change no longer have the status of kitniyos and are permitted on Pesach. However, Ⓚ Kosher does not accept this leniency and will not certify products containing kitniyos shenishtanu as kosher for Pesach; they will be certified as kitniyos or kitniyos shenishtanu. Consumers are encouraged to consult with their Rav.





WHAT IS *Pas* YISROEL?

BY RABBI YITZCHAK HANOKA,  RABBINIC COORDINATOR



This article is a brief synopsis of the Laws of Pas Yisroel to provide general awareness on the topic. For specific questions, one should take guidance from their personal Rav.


Pas is defined as baked products made from any of the five grains (wheat, oat, spelt, rye, and barley). There is a prohibition against consuming any of these five grains that were baked by a non-Jew, without the participation of a Jew. When the Chachomim enacted this prohibition, it was not accepted by all Jewish communities. As such, it did not attain the full force of a binding Halachah. Therefore, in situations where obtaining Pas Yisroel is challenging, and when specific Halachic conditions are met, it may be permissible to consume non-Pas Yisroel products.¹

The reason for this leniency is brought down in Halacha. Because bread is a staple food that a person needs for basic sustenance, they may be lenient in this regard. Based on kabbalah some Jews, including Chassidim, use this reasoning to always consume Pas Yisroel products. Since bread is the source of basic sustenance, all the more so should one be careful to get it from an elevated source and status, Pas Yisroel. There is a widespread custom that even those who eat non-Pas Yisroel products, known as Pas Palter, during the year, are stringent to eat only Pas Yisroel during the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah.

For a product to be considered pas it needs to originate from one of the five grains, be turned into a dough,

and then baked. Within these criteria the Shach adds that there are two more requirements for something to be considered pas: It must have the appearance of bread AND be made from a thick dough (not a runny/liquid batter.) However, according to the Pri Chodosh anything that might require the brocha of Birkas HaMazon after (if one ate enough) is in the category pas.

Products such as bread, matzah, baguettes, etc. would be in the category of pas according to both the Shach and the Pri Chodosh. However, when it comes to pastries or pretzels that don't have a thick batter, or the appearance of bread, they would not be considered pas according to the Shach but may be pas according to the Pri Chodosh. However, large pretzels or crackers would be considered pas according to both opinions.

Another example of this would be ice cream cones. Regular ice cream cones are made from a liquid batter. According to the Shach there is no requirement for Pas Yisroel and according to the Pri Chodosh there is. Sugar cones, however, are made from a thick batter and could be subject to the laws of Pas Yisroel (if considered to have the appearance of bread). The  requires all cones in certified food service establishments to be Pas Yisroel.

¹

For a deep discussion on this topic, refer to Kosher Spirit Tishrei 5784.

Since bread is the source of basic sustenance, all the more so should one be careful to get it from an elevated source and status, Pas Yisroel

For a product to be Pas Yisroel a Jew must be involved in the baking process. There are a few ways that this requirement can be met. A Jew can turn on the fire, put the bread in the oven, raise the flame, or even throw a twig in the oven to increase the strength of the flame. Practically speaking, it is advisable for a Jew to light the fire since all baking done with the fire that the Jew lit will be Pas Yisroel as well.

Parbaked products, which are any baked products that are deliberately underbaked and require further baking, can become Pas Yisroel when a Jew finishes off the baking. This is true even though the product was technically edible but not desirable before the Jew finished the baking. Nevertheless, since the product requires improvement before being fit to serve, it can become Pas Yisroel when a Jew finishes the baking process.

Toasting is not considered a significant enough improvement in this regard. Therefore, bread that is fully baked and is fit to be served as is cannot become Pas Yisroel by a Jew toasting it. For this reason, flour tortillas and English muffins must be Pas Yisroel and cannot become Pas Yisroel after the fact by toasting on a griddle.

Many pie crusts including graham cracker crusts can be subject to the laws of Pas Yisroel. Even though they are baked again after the pie filling is added, the pie crust is usually fully baked beforehand and does not improve by further baking, so it cannot be made Pas Yisroel by a Jew re-baking it. If, however, one buys a truly parbaked crust, it would not need to be Pas Yisroel because the second baking would improve the crust and make it fit to

serve, thereby making it Pas Yisroel.

Many contemporary Poskim maintain that there is no requirement of Pas Yisroel for breakfast cereals even when made from the five grains, given that they are manufactured through non-conventional baking processes (including steaming, extrusion, puffing, etc).

Snack bars made from whole oats (not oat flour) where the whole oats are still discernible (as in most granola bars) are not considered pas. However, when the oats fuse and dissolve and are no longer discernible (as in fig bars), the product is considered pas.

Real panko breadcrumbs are made from bread that is not conventionally baked (it is cooked by electrocution). Therefore, according to many contemporary Poskim, panko crumbs are not subject to the laws of Pas Yisroel. One needs to be sure that the panko crumbs are truly made in this way, as there are many panko style products which are made from regular bread that are subject to the laws of pas. Breadcrumbs from regular bread that is conventionally baked are subject to laws of Pas Yisroel.

Sometimes breadcrumbs are used as a filler (for example, in tuna salad) . In such situations they usually become dissolved and would be botul b'rov (nullified in the majority of the other ingredients), so one need not be concerned with Pas Yisroel. (From the perspective of Midas HaChassidus, for those that are stringent in Pas Yisroel there is room to be machmir and abstain from this type of product.) (K)



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CHASSIDIC INSIGHTS: ROSH HASHANAH

(From the talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe; translated and adapted by
Yosef Loebenstein, From the Sichos in English Collection)

ROSH HASHANAH¹, the New Year, is the Day of Judgment for all man's needs, material and spiritual,² for the coming year. Jews therefore pray on Rosh HaShanah to be blessed with children, life and prosperity, and for success in their spiritual endeavors. Simultaneously, Rosh HaShanah also is the day on which Jews crown Gd as King of the world,³ accepting upon themselves anew His absolute sovereignty. Accordingly, the theme of many of the Rosh HaShanah prayers relates to Gd's reign over the world and its inhabitants.

PARADOX IN THE ROSH HASHANAH PRAYERS

Praying for prosperity is a very different matter than participating in a coronation; indeed, they necessitate conflicting attitudes in the participants. A coronation forges a new relationship between king and people; that of ruler and subjects. A true subject, in service to his king, may entertain no independent actions, speech or even thoughts. He discards his own identity, his whole being is devoted to the king. The king, from his side, is motivated to accept the crown when his people display their desire to truly accept his rulership and be loyal subjects — that to obey and serve the king they are prepared and willing to forego their own wants. For the king's subjects, a coronation is a subjugation of the self.⁴

On the other hand, one must have a sense of self to be conscious of and pray for one's needs.⁵

Prayer on Rosh HaShanah, then, involves two contradictory modes: A Jew needs to be conscious of his wants; simultaneously, those wants must be subdued and in effect, be non-existent. How are we to resolve this paradox?⁶

Gd is truly crowned as King when all recognize His sovereignty, the realization of the Rosh HaShanah prayer, "Rule over the whole world in Your glory." In turn, Gd's majesty and presence is evident in the world when its objects are used for Gdly, holy purposes. Gd is revealed as King when Gdliness is revealed in the world.

In this grand design of transforming the hitherto mundane world into a fit abode for Gd,⁷ in which the Jews play a central role, every Jew has his allotted part. To each Jew there pertains those objects which it is his mission, and his alone, to transform into Gdliness by using them for holy purposes.⁸


This is the true motive behind the prayers for material prosperity on Rosh HaShanah. They are not prayers for personal gratification, but prayers to be granted those material objects with which to carry out one's allotted part in the task of revealing Gdliness in the world — and thereby crowning Gd as King. The paradox is thus resolved: The prayers on Rosh HaShanah for material (or even spiritual) plenty stem not from consciousness of one's personal wants but from the selfless desire to carry out one's Gd-given mission. It is but a further step in the proclamation of Gd as King.

INNER MEANING OF PRAYERS

But is this not too rarefied an ideal, one unattainable by all but the most spiritually exalted of people? The Rosh HaShanah prayers, framed by our Sages, are for all Jews, on all levels. And not all Jews can honestly say that when they pray for material prosperity it is purely for the sake of carrying out Gd's purposes.⁹

The difficulty is not that it is impossible to refrain from praying for one's wants and instead to concentrate solely on Gd's coronation, for Rosh HaShanah is the time when a Jew, any Jew, can draw close to Gd¹⁰ and, forgetting all else, be gripped with the burning desire to be together with the King. The difficulty is that all Jews, even the most ordinary, apparently are to perform contradictory services — simultaneously. One is required to ponder one's own needs and to desire Gd to fill them; but that self-same desire is to be unsullied by personal motives.

A Jew, however, is a composite of body and soul. The soul is "verily a part of Gd above,"¹¹ with the body subservient to the soul. Thus, the Baal Shem Tov taught,¹² the body's hunger for food and thirst for drink derive from the spiritual hunger of the soul inhabiting the body. Within the food and drink, as within everything in the world, there are sparks of holiness; and it is for those sparks that the soul hungers. The person may feel only the physical hunger, but in reality, the body's hunger is the soul's.

So too in the prayers of Rosh HaShanah. A Jew's heartfelt prayers for Gd's blessings may appear to be motivated by his own bodily needs and desires. But that is only the appearance. In reality, those prayers are the innermost cry of the soul, the expression of its hunger to carry out its Divine mission of transforming the world into an abode for Gd and seeing the realization of the prayer, "Rule over the whole world in Your glory." 

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XIX, pp. 291-297

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1 Lit., "Head of the Year"

2 As stated (Tehillim 81:5): "For it [Rosh HaShanah] is a decree for Israel, a [day of] judgment for the Gd of Yaakov." "Decree" refers to the judgment on material matters, while "judgment for the Gd of Yaakov" refers to the judgment on spiritual matters. (See Likkutei Torah, Rosh HaShanah, p. 55d ff.; Sefer HaMaamarim 5710, p. 15.)

3 As stated in the Rosh HaShanah prayers, "Reign over the entire world in Your glory" and "Blessed are You Lrd, King over all the earth." Indeed, our Sages say (Rosh HaShanah 16a, 34b) that Gd, so to speak, requests Jews to "crown Me as your king."

4 See Sefer HaMaamarim 5701, Maamar beginning "Tikku," chapter 2; Sefer HaMaamarim 5703, Maamar beginning "Yom Tov Shel Rosh HaShanah," ch. 2.

5 Indeed, the essence of the mitzvah of prayer is to feel one's wants — and to pray for them. (See Rambam, Hilchos Tefillah, 1:1-2; Sefer HaMitzvos (by the Tzemach Tzedek), beginning of "Shores Mitzvos HaTefillah," and sources cited there.)

6 The same paradox applies to prayer the rest of the year. When praying Shemoneh Esreh, one is as standing before a king when any independent movement is prohibited (Shabbos 10a; Shulchan Aruch Admur HaZakein, Orach Chayim 95:4; Berachos 33a). Simultaneously, the bulk of the Shemoneh Esreh prayer consists of requests for one's needs. But the paradox is not as strong as in the Rosh HaShanah prayers, for at all other times of the year Gd is as an established king governing a country, who busies himself with his subject's needs. Thus, although when actually in audience before the king one must be conscious of the king's rulership, one's needs still exist and may be addressed by the king. But when the king is being crowned, he is removed from the actual concerns and government of the kingdom; and the people at that moment concentrate totally on accepting his rulership, with no thought for their own needs.

7 See Tanya, ch. 34.

8 See Kesser Shem Tov, sec. 218.

9 Indeed, the very mitzvah of prayer is to pray for one's own needs — see footnote 5 above; Tanya, Kuntres Acharon, "LeHovin Mah SheKosuv B'Pri Etz Chayim"; see also Rambam, Hilchos Tefillah 1:2.

10 Derech Chayim, p. 13d, 21b, 91a.

11 Tanya, ch. 2.

12 Kesser Shem Tov, sec. 194; Likkutei Sichos, Vol. I, p. 177.

The Gemara in Yuma tells us that when the Kohen Gadol stood by the Kodesh HaKedoshim on Yom Kippur and sprayed the blood of the korban, he would spray once above and seven times below, counting each one out loud.

The Gemara tells us of a debate.

Rabbi Meir says the Kohen Gadol counts aloud, starting with the one above, then **one** and one, **one** and two, **one** and three, **one** and four, until he reaches **one** and seven.

Rabbi Yehudah says he counts aloud, starting with the one above, then announcing the bottom sprays first. **One** and one, **two** and one, **three** and one, **four** and one, until **seven** and one.

THERE ARE THREE QUESTIONS:

1. Why does the Kohen Gadol spray the blood one time above and seven times below?
2. Why does he have to count this out loud?
3. What is the root of the debate about how he counts?

Perhaps this can be answered according to a Gemara in Sukkah that states, "The yetzer hora, man's evil inclination, has seven names, meaning seven ways it persuades a person to sin."

On Yom Kippur, the Kohen wants the people to repent and bring the "one" G-d above to influence the seven methods of the yetzer hora below. That's why he sprays one above and seven below and counts them out loud.

Now we can understand the debate between Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah.

It is well known that in Sefer Malachi it is written **שובו אלי... ואשובה אליכם** (return to me [Hashem] and then I will return to you), meaning that Hashem wants us to take the first step and do teshuvah and then He will return to us.

And in Megillas Eichah it is written **השיבנו ה' אליך... ונשובה** (first Hashem will return to us and then we will turn to him).

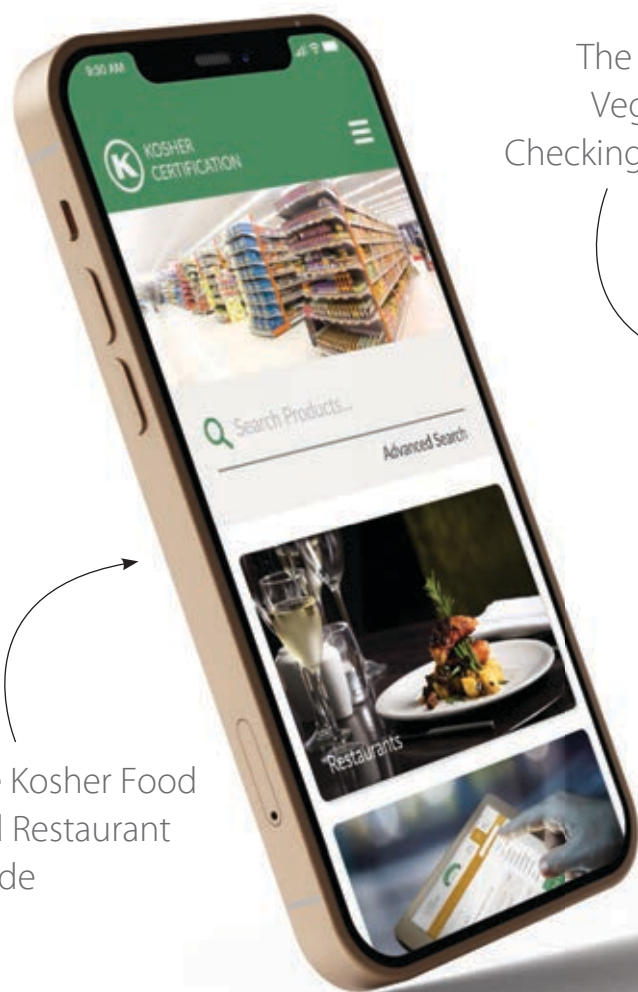
Rabbi Yehudah believes that we must take the first step and repent **שובו אלי...** and only afterwards... **ואשובה אליכם** that's why he counts the "below" sprays first and then the "one" above.

Rabbi Meir believes that Hashem should reach out to us first **השיבנו ה' אליך** and then **נשובה...** that's why he always counts the above "one" first. Ⓚ

This helps us understand why when a Yid is in a great need he says **אלקא דמאיר ענני** (G-d of Rabbi Meir, answer me!" Since Rabbi Meir says that Hashem should first make the first move, we ask Him to bestow goodness and kindness upon us first, and then we will surely return to him.

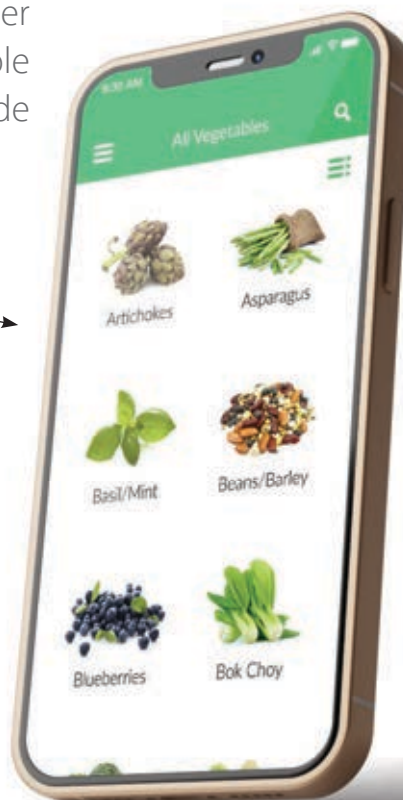


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