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CERTIFIED SOUL NUTRITION

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HAPPY PESACH!

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KOSHER SPIRIT



is dedicated to

RABBI BEREL LEVY OB" M and RABBI DON YOEL LEVY OB" M,
who set the standards of kashrus at Kosher Certification and who
inspire us daily to perpetuate and uphold their legacy.

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photo credit: Marko Dasthev

DEAR READER,

This year, on Acharon Shel Pesach, we mark the sixth yearzeit of Rabbi Don Yoel Levy OB" M, Kashrus Administrator of Kosher Certification.

For more than forty years, Rabbi Levy was fully immersed in the world of kashrus, dedicating himself to elevating and strengthening the standards of kosher certification. He personally reviewed every

initial rabbinic field report to ensure that each facility met his exacting standards. It was not unusual to receive an email or text from him before sunrise with a question about a detail in a report. Rabbi Levy also traveled extensively, visiting factories across the globe so he could personally observe each process with his own eyes.

These standards were instilled in him by his parents. His father, Rabbi Berel Levy OB" M, was among the pioneering figures in modern kashrus who refused to rely solely on representations or common industry assumptions. He championed the revolutionary approach of traveling directly to the source—no matter how distant—to verify production firsthand. Together with his wife, Mrs. Thelma Levy OB" M, who managed the office operations, they laid the groundwork and foundation of Kosher.

Rabbi Don Yoel Levy expanded upon that legacy. He established the principle that every ingredient, formula, and inspection must be thoroughly documented. Embracing emerging technologies, he commissioned the development of custom kashrus software to digitize and track thousands of reports, policies, and inspections—bringing unprecedented organization and accountability to the field.

Today, Kosher continues to uphold these very standards. Rabbinic Coordinators personally visit every facility under their responsibility. They are supported by a top-tier staff, dedicated mashgichim, and robust data and development departments—ensuring that the integrity and rigor Rabbi Levy championed remain firmly in place.

We are confident that Rabbi Don Yoel Levy and his parents look down upon Kosher with pride, seeing the enduring impact of their vision and dedication to kashrus worldwide.

May they serve as good advocates for us all and bless us with abundant siyata d'shmaya and continued success.

Wishing you a Chag Kosher v'Sameach,

Rabbi Chaim Fogelman

Editor in Chief

Executive Vaad HaKashrus

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WHAT'S THE
BROCHA?

Açaí Bowls



**BY RABBI SOLOM
BER LEPKIVKER**

Ⓢ Rabbinic Coordinator

Açaí [ah-sah-EE] bowls have a surprisingly interesting backstory. They trace back to Amazonian tribes who would mash açai berries from the açai palm into a savory dish. The sweet version we know today did not appear until the 1980s, when it became popular in Brazil. From there, it made its way to the U.S. in the 2000s by way of Hawaii, where surfers helped turn it into the sensation it is today.

The açai berry itself is naturally low in sugar (unlike most fruits) and packed with nutrients. It is often praised for supporting heart health, brain function, and metabolism. That said, the modern açai bowl — sweet, colorful, and piled high with toppings — is closer to dessert than a healthy food.

Just as one should be mindful of what goes into the body, one should also know what brocha to make on these aesthetic creations.

What's in an açai bowl?

The base of an açai bowl is made with açai berry puree or powder. The açai berry rots within 24 hours of harvesting, so açai is immediately pureed or powdered after harvesting. The açai base is typically blended with frozen fruit like bananas and strawberries, plus some liquid (often apple juice) and sweeteners. On top, you will usually find granola, chia seeds, fresh fruit, coconut flakes, nut butters, chocolate chunks, and generous drizzles of honey or maple syrup.

In short: it is basically a very attractive cholent — just significantly colder (and maybe tastier?)

So, what's the brocha?

The general rule when determining a brocha for a mixture (עיקר ושפל) is that the primary ingredient — the *ikar* — determines the blessing. Secondary ingredients — the *tafel* — are covered by the primary brocha.

If two components are both significant and neither is merely enhancing the other, then we follow the majority ingredient.

Since the açai berry base is both the primary¹ and the majority component of the bowl, the appropriate brocha is *ha'eitz*, which covers the entire blend. No additional brocha is needed for the fruits and other ingredients included in the blend.

Toppings, even if distinguished from one another, are also included in the brocha on the açai, as the açai is the *ikar*.² There is an important exception: if a *mezonos* item — such as granola clusters or cookie pieces — is added to enhance the açai bowl, the *mezonos* takes precedence due to its inherent importance. In that case, the brocha would be *mezonos*.

There are other opinions that the toppings are not considered part of the mixture, because they are not blended in; however, the first ruling is the prevailing opinion. Of course, if one's intention were to eat the toppings as the main component and one only decided to add the açai puree as an extra, a brocha on the individual toppings AND the açai puree would be required.³

If you eat an açai bowl specifically because it is açai: Ha'eitz

If you are eating an açai bowl because of the whole bowl (i.e., you don't really care what the puree is made from): Ha'eitz on one of the fruit toppings (the açai puree is covered by this brocha), and then ha'adamah on a fruit topping. If there is no ha'eitz fruit, you make ha'eitz on the puree and ha'adamah on the fruit.

1 See ש"י"ע אדמו"ר ס' ר"ב ס' א א

2 See: ש"י"ע אדמו"ר ש"ס, משנ"ב ש"ס, where it is ruled that even if the items are fully separate, they are considered a "mixture" and are affected by the *ikar* and *tafel* rules.

3 See ש"י"ע אדמו"ר ס' רד ס' י"ז

A top-down view of various citrus fruits (orange, grapefruit, lime) and a pile of white granules on a light orange background. The fruits are sliced, showing their internal segments. The granules are small, round, and piled together in the upper right corner. Faint chemical structures are visible in the background, including one with 'OH' and another with 'COOH'.

Citric Acid

FOR PESACH:

**Why is the Certification
so Important?**



**BY RABBI ELISHA
RUBIN**

Ⓜ Ingredient Evaluation
Department





Citric acid is a widely used ingredient found in a broad range of food products. It functions as an acidulant, providing sourness and a clean, sharp flavor, and is commonly used in soft drinks, candies, fruit-flavored products, sauces, and dressings. Citric acid also plays an important role in food preservation by lowering pH, which inhibits the growth of bacteria, mold, and yeast. As a result, it is frequently used in canned fruits and vegetables, jams and jellies, and shelf-stable beverages. In addition, it serves as an antioxidant, supports emulsification and stabilization, and contributes to leavening in certain baking applications.

Although citric acid occurs naturally in citrus fruits, the citric acid used in modern commercial food production is not fruit-derived. Nearly all citric acid today is produced through industrial fermentation. While this process is efficient and well established, it introduces significant halachic considerations, particularly with respect to Pesach.

How Citric Acid Is Produced

Commercial citric acid is produced through fermentation using carbohydrate feedstocks and the fungus *Aspergillus niger*. This filamentous mold naturally produces citric acid as part of its metabolism. During fermentation, it also produces enzymes such as amylases, pectinases, and cellulases, which assist in breaking down carbohydrates and improving sugar utilization.

Under controlled industrial conditions, the process is designed to promote the accumulation of citric acid rather than its further metabolism. By creating a metabolic bottleneck in the Krebs cycle, a substantial portion of the glucose consumed by the fungus is converted into citric acid and excreted into the fermentation broth. After fermentation—typically lasting five to ten days—the broth is filtered, concentrated, and dried to yield the finished citric acid. This short fermentation cycle makes the process economical and scalable.

Pesach Kashrus Considerations

The Pesach kashrus concerns associated with citric acid relate to the source of the carbohydrate feedstocks used both for fermentation and for propagation of the mold.

Fermentation feedstocks may be derived from chametz sources (such as wheat or oats), kitniyos sources (such as corn derivatives), or Kosher for

Fermentation feedstocks may be derived from chametz sources (such as wheat or oats), kitniyos sources (such as corn derivatives), or Kosher for Pesach sources (such as cane sugar or tapioca).



While citric acid derived from chometz feedstocks are rejected by all, some Poskim allow citric acid derived from kitniyos feedstocks for Pesach use... it is not universally accepted and is not the policy of  Kosher.

Pesach sources (such as cane sugar or tapioca). Each category carries distinct halachic implications for Pesach. Accordingly, evaluating citric acid for Pesach use requires full transparency regarding all raw materials used at every stage of production.

Citric acid that meets Pesach requirements is available and is used in many products certified Kosher for Pesach by  Kosher. However, not all Passover certified citric acid follows the same p'sak.

While citric acid derived from chometz feedstocks are rejected by all, some Poskim

allow citric acid derived from kitniyos feedstocks for Pesach use. This ruling is based on specific halachic frameworks that consider the effects of fermentation and the rabbinic status of kitniyos. While this is a legitimate halachic approach¹, it is not universally accepted and is not the policy of  Kosher.

¹ See Maharsham 1:183 and Orach Mishpat O.C. 109 regarding oil; Furthermore, one can compare this to musk [blood of the male dusk deer] of which many Rishonim and Poskim rule that it is permitted to be eaten due to "Panim Chadashos."

Propagation and Additional Considerations

An additional consideration is the propagation of the *Aspergillus niger* culture itself. Even when Kosher for Pesach sugars are used as fermentation feedstocks, the mold may be grown on substrates such as breadcrumbs. Although the quantity of growth medium involved is small, the mold culture is a required component of the process and therefore cannot be disregarded.

At Ⓚ Kosher, our policy is that citric acid may not be used in a finished product certified Kosher for Pesach if chametz or kitniyos is involved at any point in the production process, including feedstocks and propagation materials. The halachic argument of “nishtane” (becoming changed) does not apply to the natural and intentional progression of the production process. All foods “change” when they are cooked, and that is considered the natural process, not “nishtane”. Even in cases where halachic arguments for leniency may be raised at the ingredient level, the Ⓚ does not follow this p’sak for products bearing its Pesach certification.

The Role of the Certification Agency

Citric acid is an example of an ingredient for which Pesach standards vary, making it important for consumers to understand the p’sak relied upon by the certifying agency. An ingredient that appears simple and familiar can, in practice, involve a complex production process with multiple raw materials, biological systems, and halachic considerations that are not apparent to the consumer.

Effective kosher supervision requires a comprehensive understanding of the full manufacturing process—from feedstocks and fermentation through propagation and processing aids—and the consistent application of clearly defined standards. When a product bears Ⓚ Pesach certification, it reflects that this level of review has taken place, providing consumers with clarity and confidence as they prepare for Pesach. Ⓚ





מצות יד בסיוע מכני

בשנה שעברה עסקנו במדור זה בהיבטים ההלכתיים של סוגיית 'מצות מכונה', ובסיכום הדברים הובהר שגם בקהילות ישראל שבהן נהוג לאכול 'מצות מכונה', ראוי לאדם המקפיד כל השנה לאכול מזון בכשרות מהודרת, לרכוש מצות אלו אך ורק בכשרות מהודרת שבה מקפידים להפסיק כל 18 דקות את פעילות המכונה ולנקות ביסודיות את חלקיה, בעיקר בנקודות המעבר של הבצק בין מסוע למסוע, ובמחוררי הבצק.

בשנים האחרונות, בחלק מן המאפיות שבהן אופים את המצות בעבודת יד, התפתחו שיטות שונות שנועדו להקל על העובדים:

את נתינת הקמח ושפיכת המים שלנו וכן את לישת הבצק הראשונה עושים בעבודת יד, כנהוג מימים ימימה. אבל את המשך לישת הבצק עושים על גבי שלחן שמעליו יש משקולת שניתן להרימה ולהורידה על הבצק בלחיצה על דוושה רגלית (לא בידיים). משקולת זו הורדת ועולה על הבצק משלימה את עבודת הלישה בצורה קלה יחסית והיא מביאה את הבצק למרקם אחיד.

כמו כן, עריכת המצות אינה נעשית על ידי גלגול המערוך בידיים על גבי המצה, אלא על ידי הכנסת פיסת בצק בין שני גלגלים (כעין מערוכים) צמודים עם רווח ביניהם, ובמעבר בין הגלגלים הבצק נהפך למצה קטנה ועבה. לאחר מכן מעבירים את המצה (הקטנה והעבה) בין שני גלגלים נוספים, עם רווח צר יותר ביניהם, ואז המצה נהפכת לגדולה ודקה. סיבוב גלגלי המערוך נעשה בעבודת יד, על ידי סיבוב ידית המסובבת את הגלגלים.

ברור ומובן, שבכל 18 דקות מנקים באופן יסודי את כל שלחנות והמשקולות וגלגלי המערוכים.

להתעסק בידיים דווקא

בחלק מאותן מאפיות, התנור בנוי כמנהרה הפתוחה משתי צדדיה; בכניסה לתנור מניחים את המצות על גבי מסוע העשוי מרשת ברזל; מתחת למסוע בוערת אש בגובה אחיד לאורך כל התנור; והמצות יוצאות לבסוף בצידו השני של התנור

כשהן אפיויות ופריכות.

גם בנושא זה נחלקו פוסקי ההלכה האם מצות אלו עדיין נחשבות 'מצות עבודת יד', או שמא השימוש בדוושת הרגל וכן סיבוב גלגלי המערוך באמצעות ידית נחשבים לסייע מכני, ומשכך ייחשבו המצות 'מצות מכונה'.

יש הסוברים, שמצות אלו נחשבות כ'מצות עבודת יד' לכל דבר ועניין, וזאת מן הטעם שפעולת הרידוד מתבצעת בכוחו הישיר של האדם 'כוח גברא'. בניגוד למכונות תעשייתיות המופעלות על ידי מערכות הנעה מכניות, כאן גלגול המערוכים נעשה באמצעות ידית המסובבת את המערוך באופן ידני ובלתי אמצעי, ללא תיווך של שרשראות או גלגלי שיניים.

לשיטה זו, טמון במצות אלו הידור מיוחד מצד הזריזות והזהירות היתרה בתהליך הייצור. משך הזמן הכולל, מתחילת הלישה ועד לסיום האפייה, מצטמצם לכדי שש דקות בלבד. יתרון נוסף הקיים בחלק ממאפיות אלו הוא השימוש בתנורים בעלי עוצמת חום גבוהה במיוחד, המגיעה בפתח התנור לכ-700 מעלות צלזיוס, דבר המבטיח אפייה מהירה ומיידית. כמו כן, שינוע המצות בתנור נעשה על גבי מסוע ממתכת מחוררת, המונע חשש למגע או תערובת בין הבצק הנכנס לבין המצות שכבר נאפו, שכן המצות המוכנות ממשיכות בתנועתן הלאה על גבי המסוע ללא שהייה.

אך יש הסוברים כי כל שינוי ממסורת אפיית המצות המקובלת מדורי דורות, גורע ברמת ההידור של האפייה. ומהם אף שמחמירים ומחשיבים את המצות המרודדות והנאפות באופן המתואר - 'מצות מכונה'.

לטענתם, גם בראשית ימיהן של 'מצות המכונה' מדובר היה במכונות **ידניות** ולא חשמליות, ולפיכך מי שאסר בשעתו 'מצות מכונה', כיוון באיסורו גם לאותם גלגלי מערוכים ותנורים. בנוסף, לטענתם, משמע מלשון שולחן ערוך הרב (תנג סעיף טו, וכן מלשון הרמב"ם במנחות פרק ה משנה ב') שבכל הנוגע לעריכת המצות יש צורך להתעסק **בידיים** דווקא.

התנגדו מטעם הכמוס

כמו כן, היו מגדולי ישראל (שו"ת דברי

חיי

מצאנו -

אורח חיים

ח"א סימן כג,

ועוד) שהתנגדו

ל'מצות מכונה'

מטעם הכמוס איתם, ללא

מתן נימוק לאיסור. זאת כדי שגם אם בעתיד ימציאו מכונה או גלגלים עם ידיות לעריכת המצות באופן שישלול לכאורה כל חשש, יישאר האיסור בתוקפו. כמו כן, מבנה התנור כמנהרה הפתוחה משתי צדדיה עם מסוע שעובר על גבי האש, אינו שומר על החום כמו בתנורים הסגורים, דבר המעלה חשש להחממת המצה קודם שתיאפה כראוי.

לדברים הנ"ל נוסף שתי הערות חשובות: (א) קצרה היריעה מלהקיף את הסוגיה על כל צדדיה וסברותיה. (ב) במאמרנו זה לא באנו לפסוק הלכה בשאלה הנדונה, אלא רק לעורר המודעות בנושא. הואיל ובדרך כלל לא מצויין על התווית באיזה שיטה נאפו המצות, ולכן אלו המקפידים על 'מצות יד' בשיטה המסורתית, עליהם לברר זאת כאשר הם רוכשים את המצות. כאן המקום לציין את המובא בשולחן ערוך (אורח חיים סימן תס סעיף ב) שגדולי החכמים (הרא"ש ועוד) היו משתדלים בעצמם ב'מצות מצווה' ועומדים על עשייתן ומזרזים את העוסקים בהן ומסייעים בעריכתן, וכן ראוי לכל אדם לעשות, שכן 'מצווה בו יותר מבשלוחו'.

'מאכל אמונה' ו'מאכל רפואה'

המצה נקראת בזוהר הקדוש "מיכלא דמהימנותא" ו"מיכלא דאסוותא" - "מאכל האמונה" ו"מאכל הרפואה".

ב'אחרון של פסח', בעלות המנחה, בזמן 'סעודת משיח' (לחיוזק הציפייה לגאולה והאמונה בביאת המשיח) הנהוגה בכמה מקהילות ישראל, עלתה השמימה נשמתו של נשיא הארגון הגה"ח ר' **דן יואל ליווי** ע"ה, שהיה מסור ונתון לשמירת חומות הכשרות, במסירות נפש ממש.

בהירות המחשבה וההדרכה ההלכתית שלו בכל נושא העומד על הפרק, חסרות מאוד לעולם הכשרות. אנו תפילה כי בקרוב ממש נזכה לקיום הייעוד (ישעיהו כו, יט) "ה'קיצו וְרַגְנֵנו שְׁכַנְי עִפְרָ" והרב ליווי ע"ה בתוכם.



הרב שלמה חיים הלוי וינפלד
חבר ועד הכשרות ©



חג המצות אתגרים ופתרונות

סוגי הקמחים המומלצים ומצות הנאפות בסיוע מכני קל

יהודי מעל גיל בר מצווה ולשם מצווה'. יש שאסרו להשתמש במי ברז רגילים, גם אם לאחר מכן המים אוחסנו למשך הלילה במקום צונן. הסיבה לכך היא, שהמים בברזים עוברים דרך פילטרים ומטופלים בכלור ובפלאוריד. ולדעתם, תוספות אלו במים עלולות לגרום לבצק להחמיץ מהר יותר מן הרגיל, כפי שנפסק בשולחן ערוך (שם, סעיף ה) - מכיוון שהמלחים מחממים את הבצק ועלולים לזרז את חימוצו.

לשם מצות מצווה'

נוהגים ללוש בצק בכמות שלא תעלה על השיעור המחייב 'הפרשת חלה', כדי שיהיה קל ללוש את הבצק ולהכניס מיד את המצות לתנור. שכן עיסה גדולה מכבידה על התהליך ועלולה לעכב את האפייה, דבר המגביר את החשש להתחממות הבצק וחימוצו. אך יש שהתירו בתנורים גדולים ובמקומות שבהם אין חשש שהבצק יחמיץ - לעשות עיסה גדולה.

כאמור לעיל, המצות שבהן יוצאים ידי חובת אכילת מצה בליל-הסדר צריכות שמירה 'לשם מצות מצווה'. לפיכך צריך לוודא שהממונה לשפוך את המים לתוך הקמח וכן האחראי על לישת הבצק ורידודו, כמו גם על הכנסתו לתנור והוצאתו מתוכו - יהיה יהודי שומר תורה ומצוות, שהגיע לגיל מצוות. ויש מהגאונים שהתירו גם לפועלים שאינם יהודים לעבוד במצות, אם וכאשר עמד שם יהודי לשמור ולהשגיח על סדר האפייה.

מכל יתר מיני הדגן - (חיטה), שעורה, כוסמין, שיבולת שועל ושיפון. ומותר לו לבחור את הקמח החביב עליו, כדי שיקיים מצוות אכילת מצה לתיאבון. עם זאת, ראוי להעדיף את הכוסמין על פני קמח העשוי משעורה, משיבולת שועל או משיפון. הסיבה לכך היא, שמבנה גרעיני החיטה דומה בתכונותיו למבנה גרעיני הכוסמין, ושני הסוגים נחשבים למיני חיטים (רמב"ם הלכות חמץ ומצה פרק ה הלכה א). גרעיני החיטה וגרעיני הכוסמין הינם בעלי מבנה סגור וקליפה צמודה, המונעים ספיגה מהירה של מים, כמו גם החמצה מהירה של הבצק שנעשה מהם. לאור ה"ל", מי שבכל זאת נאלץ לקיים מצוות אכילת מצה מקמח שעורים, משיבולת שועל או משיפון, עליו להקפיד מאוד על זריזות העבודה משעת הלישה ועד סיום האפייה (יותר מאשר בחיטה ובכוסמין), מחשש שהבצק העשוי מהם יחמיץ גם בפחות מ-18 דקות.

מים שלנו

את המים המשמשים ללישת הבצק למצות, יש לשאוב מבארות או ממעיינות יום קודם האפייה, לפנות ערב (יש המקפידים לשאוב לפני שקיעת החמה, והמנהג הנפוץ הוא לשאוב את המים בזמן שקיעת החמה קודם צאת הכוכבים), ולאחסן אותם בכלים שלא מתחממים ובמקום קריר, למשך הלילה. משתדלים ששאיבת המים תיעשה על ידי

אחת המצוות המרכזיות של ליל-הסדר היא אכילת 'מצה שמורה', כנאמר (שמות יב, יז-יח): "וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת הַמִּצּוֹת כִּי בְעֵצְם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה ... וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם; בְּרֹאשׁוֹן בְּאַרְבַּעַה עָשָׂר יוֹם ... בְּעָרֵב תֹּאכְלוּ מִצַּת עַד יוֹם הָאֶחָד וְעֵשְׂרִים לַחֲדָשׁ בְּעָרֵב". בפשטות, משמעות הציווי 'וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת הַמִּצּוֹת', היא, שמירה על כל תהליך הכנת הבצק עד לאחר האפייה, לבל יחמיץ. אבל בתלמוד (פסחים מ, א) מסופר על האמורא רבא שהורה לפועלים המלקטים את שיבולי החיטים בשדה, לשמור עליהם "לשם מצווה" - כבר מרגע הקציר. להלכה נפסק (שולחן ערוך סימן תנג, סעיף ד) שלכתחילה טוב לשמור את החיטים משעת קצירתן, אך 'בשעת הדחק' מותר לקנות בשוק קמח שנטחן ללא שמירה. כאן חשוב לציין כי כיום ברוב המדינות גרעיני החיטה עוברים שטיפה במים לפני טחינתם, ועל כן לכל הדעות חובה להשתמש לאפיית מצות - גם בעבור שאר ימות החג - אך ורק בקמח מחיטים שנשמרו ממגע עם מים החל מרגע הקצירה.

הקמחים המומלצים

מצווה מן המובהק, וכך הוא המנהג ברוב קהילות ישראל, לאכול בליל הסדר מצות שנאפו מקמח חיטה. אך מי שאינו יכול לאכול מצה מקמח חיטה, רשאי מעיקר הדין לקיים את המצווה במצות שנעשו

STUFFED BABY EGGPLANT WITH VEAL & SPINACH

These stuffed baby eggplants are as elegant as they are satisfying. The tender roasted shells cradle a savory filling of veal and spinach (or beef, if you prefer), creating a dish that feels both rustic and refined. They make a beautiful addition to a Yom Tov table — hearty enough to stand alone, yet light enough to pair with other mains.

INGREDIENTS:

5-6 baby eggplants
Olive oil, for drizzling
2-3 frozen garlic cubes (thawed just enough to spread)
Fine sea salt, to taste
Fine black pepper, to taste
1 batch Veal & Spinach Filling (page 131)

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Wash eggplants well. Slice each in half lengthwise, leaving the green tip attached for presentation. Score the flesh in a criss-cross pattern without cutting through the skin. Drizzle with olive oil; rub with garlic, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place cut-side down on prepared sheet pan. Roast for 25–30 minutes, until tender and lightly golden. Let cool slightly. Use a spoon to scoop out flesh, leaving a ¼-inch edge to form shells. (Optional: Chop reserved flesh and mix into the

prepared filling.)

For a glossy finish, brush inside edges with a little olive oil before filling.

Generously spoon filling of choice into shells, mounding slightly.

Reduce oven temperature to 375°F.

Return filled eggplants to oven; bake for 15–20 minutes, until heated through and tops are lightly browned.

BATYA'S TIPS

If freezing for later use, fill and freeze unbaked (step 7). Thaw; bake at 375°F for 15-20 minutes before serving.

PAIRING & PRESENTATION

Nestle each stuffed eggplant half over a swoosh of vegetable mash (parsnip or cauliflower work beautifully). It elevates the plating and adds creaminess under the savory filling. Garnish with chopped, checked herbs or pomegranate seeds for a pop of color.

VEAL & SPINACH A YEAR-ROUND ELEGANT FILLING.

INGREDIENTS:

VEAL MIXTURE

2 Tbsp oil
2 Spanish onions, finely diced
3-4 garlic cloves, minced, or 3 frozen garlic cubes
2 lb ground veal
1 Tbsp onion powder
1 Tbsp garlic powder
1 Tbsp paprika
½ cup Pesach crumbs (optional)
1 tsp fine sea salt
¼ tsp fine black pepper

VEAL MIXTURE

1 small onion, diced
24 oz frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
2 garlic cloves, minced, or 2 frozen garlic cubes

2 Tbsp olive oil
2 Tbsp onion soup mix (I use Goodman's)
1 egg, beaten (optional; see note)
1 tsp fine sea salt, to taste
½ tsp fine black pepper, to taste
2 Spanish onions, finely diced
3-4 garlic cloves, minced, or 3 froz

INSTRUCTIONS

Prepare the veal mixture: Heat oil in a wide skillet over medium heat. Add onions; sauté for 5-7 minutes, until golden. Add garlic; sauté for 1 additional minute.

Add ground veal; add salt, pepper, onion powder, garlic powder, and paprika. Break the meat up with a wooden spoon or meat masher as it cooks. Cook for 8-10 minutes, until fully browned. Drain off excess liquid, if necessary.

Prepare the spinach mixture: In a second pan, heat oil; add onion and sauté for

3 minutes, until it sweats. Add drained spinach, garlic, and onion soup mix. Cook for an additional 8-10 minutes until liquid has evaporated and spinach is well flavored. Cool slightly.

Prepare the filling: Stir spinach mixture into veal mixture. Gradually add Pesach crumbs (if using) until the mixture holds together. If still loose, fold in 1 beaten egg (if using).

Allow the mixture to cool completely before filling. Wrap and roll!

Generously spoon filling of choice into shells, mounding slightly.

Reduce oven temperature to 375°F. Return filled eggplants to oven; bake for 15-20 minutes, until heated through and tops are lightly browned.

BATYA'S TIPS

Flavor swap: Lighten it up by using dark ground chicken or turkey.

Year-Round Swaps & Smarts: See page 349.

RUSSIA: A JOURNEY OF KEDUSHAH AND PURPOSE

RABBI KALMAN WEINFELD REFLECTS ON HIS VISIT TO
RUSSIA WITH RABBI DON YOEL LEVY, OB"AM
AS TOLD TO DINA FRAENKEL



As we approach Pesach, the festival of freedom and geulah, we are reminded of our life's mission: to spread light and kedushah in the world. Kosher Spirit sat down with **Rabbi Kalman Weinfeld** to hear about his unforgettable trip to Russia with **Rabbi Don Yoel Levy, OB" M**, just months before Rabbi Levy's passing, and the lasting lessons it left on him.

When Rabbis Don Yoel Levy and Kalman Weinfeld boarded a plane to Russia in Kislev 5780 (December 2019), the trip was intended as a mission to strengthen and assist local Jewish communities. But for Rabbi Weinfeld, it became something far deeper: an experience of faith, inspiration, and enduring connection.

At the time of the trip, Rabbi Weinfeld served as head of the **Food Service Department**, overseeing kosher certification for restaurants and caterers worldwide. Following Rabbi Levy's passing, he was also appointed both a **member of the © Kosher Executive Vaad HaKashrus** and **Rav of Beis Eliezer Yitzchok Shul**, founded by Rabbi Don Yoel Levy.

Over several packed days, they visited Jewish communities, offered guidance in kashrus, and davened at the sacred resting places of the Lubavitcher Rebbeim ז"ל. What began as a professional journey soon became an experience of timeless inspiration.

A MISSION TAKES SHAPE

"The purpose of the trip," Rabbi Weinfeld recalls, "was to assist the Moscow Jewish community with their kashrus operations. Local leaders had reached out several times asking me, in my capacity as head of the Food Service Department responsible for all © Kosher-certified restaurants and caterers, to visit their facilities and advise the rabbonim on the latest systems and improvements so they could implement them locally."

Rabbi Don Yoel Levy's personal engagement with Russian Jewry was not only historical but also active and ongoing. As head of © Kosher, he had traveled to Russia and Ukraine many times to inspect and advise kosher facilities, meet with local rabbonim, and support Jewish communal growth. This trip coincided with the wedding of Chief Rabbi Berel Lazar's daughter, a moment that underscored his long-standing relationship with the Russian Jewish community.

Rabbi Levy had been a personal friend and supporter of Rabbi Lazar from the very beginning of his work in Russia, and Rabbi Lazar always invited him to his simchos. "Rabbi Levy approached me and said, 'Kalman, I think this is the perfect time for you to join me and help the community with their needs.' So, I figured it was a great opportunity to join such a visit with my uncle and mentor, from whom I knew I would learn so much."

CARRYING THE TORCH OF A SACRED LEGACY

For Rabbi Levy, the trip was not merely logistical. His connection to Russia ran deep, rooted in the legacy of his parents, Rabbi Berel and Mrs. Thelma Levy, of blessed memory. Sent multiple times by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, they risked their safety to gather information on his behalf and served as his eyes and ears within the Soviet Union during its darkest years of repression. They also acted as a vital point of contact, communicating back and forth by phone, often speaking in codes, and bringing essential religious articles on behalf of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.





Chief Rabbi of Russia, Rabbi Berel Lazar, with Rabbi Levy at the wedding of Rabbi Lazar's daughter



Rabbi Weinfeld and Rabbi Levy at the bridge where the Baal HaTanya hid from Napoleon



Rabbi Levy & Rabbi Weinfeld meeting with Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rav Yaakov Yosef



Rabbi Levy inspecting an OK certified facility in Russia

“Rabbi Levy himself accompanied his parents on some of those early trips,” Rabbi Weinfeld explains. “He felt a profound bond with Russian Jewry and a sense of responsibility toward them. Traveling with him was a privilege, to witness how this connection was both historical and deeply personal.”

From the moment they landed, Rabbi Weinfeld observed the same consistency of purpose that had defined Rabbi Levy’s entire life.

“Even far from home, away from the  office and the shul where he served as Rav, Rabbi Levy maintained his exact daily schedule. Each morning’s schedule included mikvah, Chassidus, and Gemara, followed by the earliest possible Shacharis minyan and daily shiurim, as well as his morning jog, a perfect balance of ruchniyus and *shemiras haguf*. Even though we were traveling and the schedule was packed, his avodas Hashem was his anchor.”

Smiling, Rabbi Weinfeld adds, “As his nephew, I wasn’t surprised. I’ve seen him live this way since I was a child. Still, it was deeply moving to witness that same unwavering consistency, even thousands of miles from home.”

Despite his discipline, Rabbi Levy was also warm and considerate. “I usually davened at a slightly later minyan,” Rabbi Weinfeld shares. “But he would never start

breakfast without waiting for me so we could eat together. That was Rabbi Levy; firm in principle yet deeply sensitive to others.”

Throughout their journey, Rabbi Levy met with leading rabbonim, including the Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Israel at the time, HaRav Yitzchak Yosef, shlit”a, who was in Moscow as a guest of honor for a large event.

“I was privileged to sit in on their meeting,” says Rabbi Weinfeld. “Rav Yosef expressed great admiration for  Kosher’s meticulous kashrus protocols and advanced systems. When I explained some of our food-service procedures, he said he would share these methods with his colleagues in Eretz Yisroel. It was a true kiddush Hashem, seeing how Rabbi Levy’s leadership inspired global respect for halachic excellence.”

They also visited several local food-service locations together with Rabbi Yossi Verzub, Executive Director of the Chief Rabbinate of Russia’s kashrus department, under the leadership of Rabbi Lazar, a close friend of  Kosher.

During the trip, Rabbi Weinfeld and Rabbi Levy also met Rabbi Yitzchak Kogan, known as “the Shochet,” whose story epitomizes courage under Soviet oppression. As a young man in Leningrad (now S. Petersburg), Rabbi Kogan had resolved to become a shochet so that fellow Jews could



Rabbi Levy & Rabbi Weinfeld in front of the Kremlin in Moscow



Rabbi Levy and Rabbi Weinfeld in Moscow



Rabbi Kogan, Rabbi Levy and Rabbi Weinfeld

eat kosher, even under the watchful eye of the Communist regime. The Lubavitcher Rebbe's encouragement kept him strong throughout the long and dangerous process of learning and practicing shechitah in secret.

Years earlier, Rabbi Berel Levy, OB" M, traveling discreetly at the Rebbe's behest, had made repeated forays into the USSR to strengthen Jewish life. On one such clandestine visit, he met Rabbi Kogan. At that time, the authorities' scrutiny made it dangerous for local rabbonim to issue written kabbalah (certification) for shechitah. Though local rabbonim observed Rabbi Kogan and acknowledged his skill, none were willing to put it in writing. It was Rabbi Berel Levy who courageously and knowledgeably stepped forward to grant Rabbi Kogan a written kabbalah after personally examining his expertise. For the hidden community, this act marked a turning point—the difference between scarcity and the steady possibility of kosher food, achieved in defiance of a hostile regime.

Decades later, Rabbi Kogan would emerge as a pillar of Moscow's revitalized Jewish life, serving as rabbi of the historic Bolshaya Bronnaya Synagogue and as Chief Shochet under the supervision of Rabbi Berel Lazar. Looking back, he spoke of Rabbi Berel Levy with awe, describing him as fearless, purposeful, and utterly certain of his shlichus. That quiet act of giving a young shochet his certification in the shadows of Leningrad helped plant the seeds of Russia's Jewish rebirth. The meeting between Rabbi Don Yoel Levy and Rabbi Kogan was no small encounter for either of them, and Rabbi Kogan's deep respect was evident.

A JOURNEY WITHIN A JOURNEY

Then came an unexpected turn that transformed the trip from memorable to unforgettable.

"Every kitchen inspection felt like part of a bigger picture: the restoration of Jewish life in a land where it had once been forced underground."

"A day before we were supposed to fly home," Rabbi Weinfeld recalls, "I received an early-morning text from Rabbi Levy: 'Are you awake? Can we have a short conversation?' When I called him back, he said, 'Kalman, we're here in Russia, and I've never been to the city of Lubavitch. My wife encouraged me to go. Would you be willing to delay our return and join me on this trip?'"

Rabbi Weinfeld didn't hesitate. "I immediately called my wife, as he instructed me, to ask for her permission and she was thrilled that I'd have the chance to visit Lubavitch. That detour, and those few hours, will stay with me forever."

Lubavitch, the cradle of Chabad Chassidus, carries a spiritual gravity that words can scarcely capture. Standing at the *oholei kodesh* of the Rebbeim, Rabbi Weinfeld felt the presence of generations of tzaddikim.

At that time, he was still recovering from a serious knee injury sustained just weeks earlier. "As we were leaving the Ohel, Rabbi Levy turned to me and said, 'Kalman, I was davening hard that you should have a *refuah shleimah b'karov*.' Those words meant so much to me; they came straight from his heart."

KASHRUS, CONNECTION, AND CARE

Alongside their spiritual itinerary, their practical mission continued. Rabbi Weinfeld and Rabbi Levy visited

restaurants, catering facilities, and other kosher food establishments throughout Moscow, working closely with local rabbonim to review and refine their procedures.

“It was meaningful to bring our expertise to communities still rebuilding from decades of spiritual suppression,” Rabbi Weinfeld reflects. “Every conversation, every kitchen inspection, felt like part of a bigger picture: the restoration of Jewish life in a land where it had once been forced underground.”

Despite the challenges of travel, compounded by Rabbi Weinfeld’s injury, Rabbi Levy’s care and patience never wavered.

“He made sure I was comfortable at every step,” says Rabbi Weinfeld. “He had a remarkable blend of gevurah and chesed, a firm dedication to his mission coupled with genuine gentleness toward others.”

LESSONS THAT ENDURE

Looking back, Rabbi Weinfeld identifies one central lesson that continues to guide his work and worldview.

“Rabbi Levy was busy every moment of the day. Even while traveling, he carved out time to learn Torah and to handle his regular **Ⓚ** leadership responsibilities. Watching him reinforced for me what the Rebbe taught: there is no such thing as a vacation from avodas Hashem. A person must always be doing, always accomplishing, always using every moment for what Hashem places before them.”

It was this fusion of yiras Shomayim, diligence, and compassion that defined Rabbi Levy’s leadership.

“His father, Rabbi Berel Levy, once had a private audience with the Rebbe, who said about Rabbi Don Yoel Levy to his father, ‘Er iz a groiser yerei Shamayim’ — ‘He is a great G-d-fearing man.’ I saw this with my own eyes, from the second we left home until we returned to New

York. Every interaction and every decision was guided by yiras Shomayim.”

A LIVING LEGACY

For Rabbi Weinfeld, the trip remains a touchstone, a living lesson in purpose, humility, and dedication.

“We are all busy with life, work, travel, and family. But Rabbi Levy showed that kedushah is not confined to the synagogue or to Shabbos. It is a way of being, every second, wherever you are in the world. That’s what it means to be a *dugma chaya*, a living example of yiras Shomayim.”

Years later, the inspiration of that journey still reverberates, not only in Rabbi Weinfeld’s heart but throughout the global **Ⓚ** Kosher network.

Behind every **Ⓚ** symbol, he says, stands more than halachic precision. It represents a legacy of emunah, mesiras nefesh, and unwavering avodas Hashem.

Rabbi Levy’s final trip to Russia was, in essence, a journey of the Jewish soul — a bridge between past and present, between halachic discipline and heartfelt devotion. It remains a journey that continues to guide all who walk the path he illuminated with integrity, humility, and yiras Shomayim. **Ⓚ**



Historic shul in Smolensk



Oholei Kodesh of the Rebbe Maharash and the Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch



KOSHER



A Mesorah That Moves Forward

RABBI ELI LANDO
Executive Manager

When Pesach arrives, something shifts in a Jewish home. The standards rise. Details matter more. Everyone becomes a mashgiach.

Kashrus is a year-round responsibility, and Pesach makes that responsibility visible. Even the greeting changes. We do not simply say, “Gut Yom Tov.” We add, “Kosher and Freilichen Pesach.” The brocha itself reflects heightened awareness.

The Torah defines Nissan as a beginning: “*HaChodesh hazeh lachem rosh chadashim,*” this month shall be for you the head of months. Nissan is far more than another point on the calendar. It is the starting point. It sets the tone for the year that follows.

The Arizal teaches that one who is careful with even a *mashehu* of chametz on Pesach is assured that nothing undesirable will happen throughout

the year. The Zohar describes matzah as *michla d’meheimnusa* and *michla d’asvasa*, nourishment of faith and healing, and teaches that how we conduct ourselves on Pesach shapes us year-round.

Nissan teaches that what is established at the outset shapes everything that follows, for it is the month of redemption, when the foundations of our identity were formed. So too, in kashrus, what is established at the outset shapes everything that follows.

It is clear *hashgochah protis* that both Rabbi Berel Levy OB”M, who transformed the © into a serious force in modern kashrus, and Rabbi Don Yoel Levy OB”M, who built it into the global organization it is today, completed their mission in this physical world in the month of Nissan.

Standards and Leadership

Rabbi Don Yoel Levy devoted his life to ensuring that standards were carefully maintained and strengthened. In past issues of *Kosher Spirit*, he often reflected on the mesorah he inherited from his father. He consistently returned to one theme: standards.

He spoke about responsibility. He spoke about continuity. He described his role as safeguarding what had been entrusted to him.

The humility was genuine. He consistently attributed what he built to what he had received. He saw himself as carrying forward a foundation already laid. But those who were closely involved understood something more. He did not simply preserve a mesorah. He

deepened it. He strengthened it. He built upon it in ways that reshaped how kashrus operates today.

He articulated a clear hierarchy that guided Ⓢ's decisions. His leadership was not theoretical; he remained actively involved in the field, even in his later years.

A kashrus agency answers first to Hashem, and only after that, to itself. That framework shaped policy and daily decision-making. Integrity was the working standard - a value actively expressed in practice. He also conveyed something important: a mesorah lives and advances through continued growth. That understanding shaped how he led and shapes how we continue.

That same sense of responsibility defined how he related to people.

The Rambam writes in *Hilchos Talmud Torah* that just as students must honor their teacher, so too a teacher must honor his students and draw them close, loving them as children who bring merit in this world and the next.

Those of us who worked closely with Rabbi Don Yoel Levy felt that relationship. His expectations were high and his standards uncompromising, yet alongside that strength was genuine care. He invested in people and entrusted responsibility, allowing people to rise to it. We strive to carry that forward and hope that in doing so, we bring true nachas.

Policy and Responsibility

Reliable kosher certification is not only about knowing what is technically permissible. It is about policy - how decisions are made when more than one legitimate halachic approach exists.

Something that appears simple on a label can involve significant halachic and industrial complexity. In many cases, there is more than one acceptable approach. (Ed. Note: See article on citric acid for Pesach in this issue.)

The responsibility of a kashrus agency is to determine which approach most faithfully reflects its standards and its

guiding principles. At Ⓢ Kosher, our Executive Vaad HaKashrus of Rabbonim, building on the standards established by Rabbi Don Yoel Levy and in consultation with our Poskim, approaches those situations through careful consideration, ensuring that the policy fully reflects consistency and halachic responsibility.

That approach guides how we operate throughout the year.

Six Years Later

Six years have passed since Rabbi Don Yoel Levy's petirah.

The focus has been clear: strengthening systems, refining supervision, and expanding kashrus responsibly to communities and industries around the world without compromise.

Certification is approached as an ongoing process that includes review and verification. The systems in place continue to be evaluated and refined.

From Nissan to Nissan

Chazal say, "In Nissan we were redeemed, and in Nissan we are destined to be redeemed again."

Beginnings matter.

Rabbi Berel Levy laid a foundation. Rabbi Don Yoel Levy reinforced and structured it.

Today, the Vaad and leadership of Ⓢ Kosher continue that work, building on what we received from these giants. The Executive Vaad HaKashrus approaches this responsibility with the same understanding: a mesorah lives and advances through continued growth.

From year to year, the work continues, carried forward with care and accountability.

May we be zocheh to the ultimate redemption, to celebrate Pesach in the Beis HaMikdash HaShlishi, and to witness the fulfillment of "*Hakitsu v'ranenu shochei afar*."



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A CLOSER

LOOK: Wheat Flour



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What is wheat flour?

Wheat flour is a finely ground powder made from wheat kernels. Wheat is a widely cultivated grain, and the flour is a staple ingredient in both baking and cooking. When wheat flour is combined with water, it forms gluten, which gives structure to foods such as bread, cakes, and pasta. Each type of wheat has a unique gluten content. Soft wheat is low in gluten and is typically used for cakes and pastries, while hard wheat has a higher gluten content and is mainly used in breadmaking.

How is wheat flour made?

Producing wheat flour is a multi-step process, including cleaning, tempering, milling, sifting, bleaching, and enrichment.

First, the raw wheat is cleaned to remove all impurities and foreign objects.

The wheat then goes through a tempering process where a fine mist of water is sprayed on the wheat while it passes on a screw conveyor. The wheat is then conveyed into large tempering bins for 8-16 hours to absorb the moisture. This process is

done to increase the moisture level of the wheat and help with the milling process.

The next step is milling, where rollers are used to crush the grain, breaking it into smaller parts (bran, germ, and endosperm).

Then comes the sifting process, where all the broken grains are passed through sieves to separate the particles by size.

White flour is chemically bleached for a whiter color and finer crumb.

Some flours are enriched by blending a very small amount of iron and B vitamins (nutrients lost during the processing of white flour) into the flour. All-purpose flour and bread flour often contain malted barley flour, which is added to enhance yeast fermentation and improve bread textures.

What is different about wheat flour for matzah?

The production of wheat flour for kosher l'Pesach matzah is quite different as no water can be used in the milling process. The mill for matzah flour must be dedicated to Passover flour or thoroughly cleaned before the start of the process. For Shmurah Matzah, the wheat must be watched from the harvesting process to make sure it does not come into any contact with water from the moment it is cut from the ground.

What are the kashrus challenges with wheat flour?

Flour is acceptable without kosher certification as long as it is not a product of Israel. Even when the above-mentioned additives are included, they are used below



the threshold for bitul. Obviously, kosher certified flour will have all of the additives kosher certified and not rely on bitul.

What about regular wheat flour over Passover?

Historically, the tempering process involved soaking the wheat in water and it is mentioned in the Gemara that it was allowed as long as the wheat was kept in constant motion and ground immediately.¹ The Geonim prohibit tempering the Pesach wheat because the knowledge of tempering without making the wheat chometz was lost and there is a concern that it will not be ground immediately.²

Modern production uses a mist of water that is sprayed on the wheat. While it is much less water than what was historically used, the flour is still not suitable for Pesach.

The flour cannot be owned by a Jew during Pesach, because it was not kept in constant motion and not ground immediately.³

Some communities avoid selling chometz *gamur* (actual chometz) but will often include flour in their chometz sale. The Passover prohibition is only because the flour is safeik chometz⁴, not chometz gamur, since the wheat kernels do not crack from this process.

1. ראה גמרא פסחים מ, א.

2. טור, ב"י וש"ע או"ח תנג, ה.

3. שו"ע או"ח תנ"ג - שו"ע הרב סעיף כא ומשנה ברורה כז.

4. ראה בסימן תמוז - מג"א יב, שו"ע אדה"ז ז, ופרי מגדים מ"ז ג.

Yoshon⁵:

During the time of the Beis HaMikdash, the consumption of wheat, barley, spelt, rye, and oats was prohibited if they were "new" (chodosh). Grain that was planted before Pesach became "old" (yoshon) after the offering of the Korban Omer.

There is a halachic debate whether the prohibition of chodosh applies today, especially outside of Eretz Yisroel. In recent years, it has become more common for people to be stringent and consume only yoshon products, so there is increased demand for wheat flour that is certified to be yoshon.

During the period following Pesach, until the summer when the spring wheat reaches the market, all flour is yoshon.

Once the new spring wheat reaches the market there are different approaches to certifying flour as yoshon:

1. Mills that do not process spring wheat are the simplest to certify. The mashgiach verifies that all additives, such as enrichment and barley malt flour, are yoshon.
2. Some mills process the flour in advance but keep it in cold storage to avoid the risk of insect infestation due to the extended storage time.
3. The third option is to make special runs of yoshon flour from wheat kernels that have been kept in sealed rail cars or silos. In this case the machinery is cleaned well and flushed from any chodosh flour. ☞

5. To read more about yoshon, see <https://www.ok.org/consumers/related-mitzvahs/yoshon-qa/>.

There, Here, and Nowhere



Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Courtesy of Meaningfullife.com

The Torah's discussion (*in Exodus 12 and 13 and Deuteronomy 6*) of the seder dialogue reveals several versions of the child's questions and the parent's response. The Haggadah explains that, "The *Torah* is addressing itself to four sons: the wise, the wicked, the simple, and the one who does not know how to ask." Depending on how (and if) the child articulates his question, the Torah offers four different approaches to explaining the message of the festival and the significance of our freedom.

1. THE WISE SON asks intelligent, detailed and well-structured questions that reflect the thoroughness of his observations and his desire to know, appreciate and participate. The proud father responds with a detailed explanation of the *seder* observances from beginning to end, all the way to the law that "one should not serve up any dessert after the meat of the Passover offering," so that its taste should linger in our mouths long after the seder. (Today, the same law applies to the *afikoman*, the matzah eaten at the end of the meal in commemoration of the *Passover* offering.)

2. THE WICKED SON, observing the labor and expense that go into the making of the seder, asks: "Whatever for is

this work of yours?" (Exodus 12:26). "This work of *yours*," notes the *Haggadah* — this is something he wants no part of himself. "This is because of what Gd did for me," replies the father in kind, "when I left Egypt" (Ibid. 13:8). "For me... when I left Egypt" implying, explains the Haggadah, that "had he (the wicked child) been there, he would not have been redeemed."

3. TO THE SIMPLE SON, who can manage only a lame "What is this?", the father responds with an appropriately elementary explanation of the night's significance.

4. And to the father of the "**THE SON WHO DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO ASK**", the Torah instructs: "And you shall tell your child." You initiate the discussion; you prod him into conversation and participation.

Talking to the Wicked

Of the above responses, our answer to the wicked son begs clarification. Why do we tell him that he would have been left behind in Egypt at the time of the Exodus?

Factually, this was indeed the case. Our sages (based on Exodus 13:18) tell us that only one out of five Jews departed Egypt for Sinai on the first Passover. The other four-fifths refused to leave, preferring slavery to Pharaoh



over commitment to Gd. These Jews were not redeemed. For though Gd accepted the Jews in Egypt as they were, despite their lowly spiritual station after two centuries of enslavement to the most debased society on earth, there was one condition: one had to desire freedom in order to deserve it.

Still, what is to be gained by telling the wicked son that had he been there, he would not have been redeemed? Do we wish to further alienate an already alienated child?

Explains the Lubavitcher Rebbe: In truth, our response to the wicked son is not a message of banishment and rejection, but one of acceptance and promise. The emphasis is on the word “there” in our reply. Had he been *there*, we tell the wicked son, he would not have been redeemed. The Exodus from Egypt was before the Giving of the Torah at Sinai, before Gd’s ultimate choice of Israel. There, in Egypt, redemption was contingent upon the Jew’s choice and consent. Had he been there, he would still be there. But he was not there — he is here.

Here is after Sinai. Here, free is what we are rather than something that we might elect or decline to be. True, we are currently in exile, but “on that day,” prophesies Isaiah, “you will be gathered up one by one, O children of Israel.” When Gd shall again come to redeem us, **NOT A SINGLE JEW WILL BE LEFT BEHIND.**

The Fifth Son

As different as they may be, the four sons of the Haggadah have one thing in common: whether involved, challenging, inept or indifferent, they are all present at the seder table. They are all relating, albeit in vastly differing ways, to our annual reliving of the Exodus and our birth as a nation. The line of communication is open; the potential wise son that resides within every Jewish child is approachable.

Today, however, in our era of spiritual displacement, there also exists a fifth son: **THE JEW WHO IS ABSENT FROM THE SEDER TABLE.** He asks no questions, poses no challenges, displays no interest. For he knows nothing of the seder, nothing of the significance of the Exodus, nothing of the revelation at Sinai at which we assumed our mission and role as Jews.

To these children of Gd we must devote ourselves long before the first night of Passover. We must not forget a single Jewish child; we must invest all our energies and resources to bringing every last fifth son to the seder-table of Jewish life.

Based on the Rebbe’s talks and writings, including a public letter addressed “to our brethren the Jewish people, and all educators in particular” dated Nissan 11, 5717 (April 12, 1957)

Eggs —the quintessential Pesach food, second only to matzah! Eggs for breakfast, eggs for lunch, hard-boiled eggs on your Chol HaMoed trip. They are ubiquitous on Pesach and, thankfully, a healthy choice, both at home and on the go.

EGGS ARE ONE

of the most nutrient-rich foods. One egg contains vitamin A, folate, vitamin B5, vitamin B12, vitamin B2, phosphorus, selenium, vitamin D, vitamin E, vitamin B6, calcium, and zinc.

CHOLINE, A MICRONUTRIENT FOUND IN EGGS,

is an important nutrient for infant development in the womb. It is often recommended that pregnant women increase their egg intake to boost the amount of choline that reaches the baby.

OLDER STUDIES

associated egg consumption with high LDL cholesterol, but newer studies have discounted this theory for the general population.

EGGS ARE (USUALLY!) A BUDGET-FRIENDLY PROTEIN,

and their pareve status makes them especially versatile in kosher cooking.

EGGS ARE A LOW-CALORIE FOOD

and high in protein, packing in 6 grams of protein per egg.

EGG YOLKS CONTAIN

lutein and zeaxanthin, antioxidants that protect against eye degeneration.

EGGS ARE HIGH IN IODINE,

which is important for normal thyroid function.

EGGS



SOUL NUTRITION

BY RABBI CHAIM FOGELMAN

© Executive Vaad HaKashrus

פסח

Pesach marks the moment when Hashem chose us as His nation and redeemed us from Egypt. Our liberation was not merely an act of freedom from bondage; it was a purposeful journey toward Har Sinai, where we would enter into a covenant with Hashem by accepting the Torah and its commandments.

This can also be seen when you look deeply into the word Pesach.

In Hebrew the word פסח is spelled פ ס ח.

פסח written out in full, with each letter spelled out, פה סמך חת, has the numerical value of 613, hinting at the deeper reason Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim.

We all know that when Hashem made the covenant with Avrohom by the *Bris Bein Ha'besorim* (ברית בין הבתרים), Hashem said that the Yidden would be enslaved in Mitzrayim for 400 years. So, how did Hashem take us out after 210 years?

The answer is that the Yidden multiplied so greatly in Mitzrayim that the number of Yidden that were enslaved was equal to 400 years of the original Yidden who entered Mitzrayim.

Now we can understand what the Navi Yeshayahu said:

“הקטן יהיה לאלף והצעיר לגוי עצום...” The small one, a thousand, and the least, a mighty nation....

“בעתה אחישנה,” in haste and in due time. How can it be **BOTH** in haste and in due time?

The answer is that just like in Mitzrayim the great multiplication of Klal Yisroel brought the geulah quickly, so too, the final redemption will come quickly and in due time.

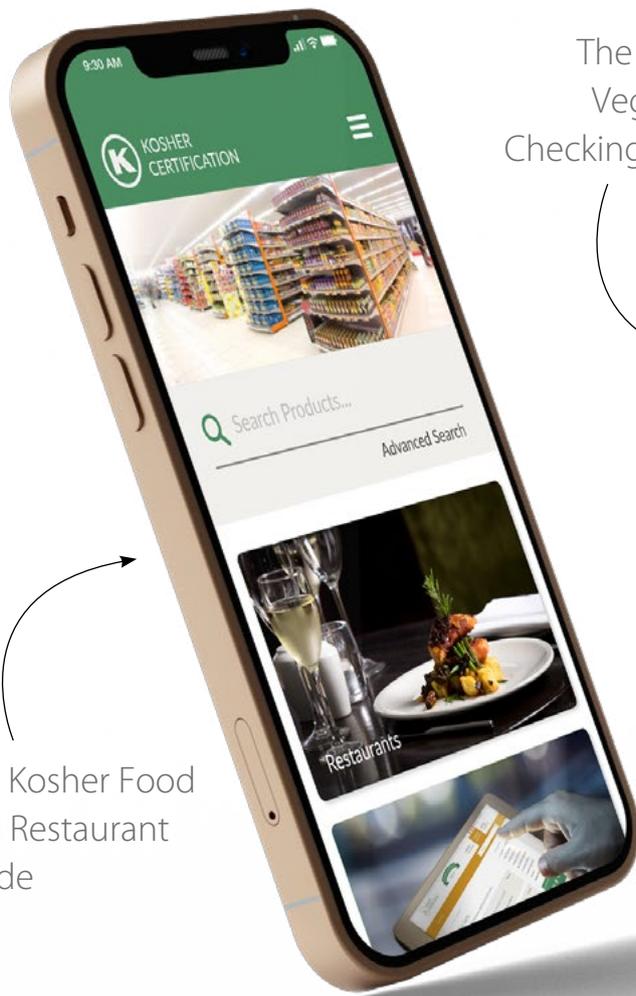
A similar explanation of how the Yidden left Mitzrayim after 210 years and not 400 can be found in the posuk that says:

“וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת-חַיֵּיהֶם בְּעִבְדָּה קָשָׁה” (שמות א, יד)

“[The Egyptians] made their [the Jews] life bitter with hard labor.”

The trop (cantillation marks) on those words is *Kaddmah V'azla*, which in Hebrew means “they advanced and moved ahead”. This can be interpreted as, “due to the excessive hard labor that made their lives miserable, the redemption time was advanced and moved ahead”.

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