Star-K Kosher Certification

Kashrus

The Traveler’s Halachic Guide to Hotels

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Kashrus Administrator

Yosef chose the particular hotel he was staying in for its many amenities, not the least of which was the free Continental Breakfast it offered its guests. Surely, when kosher symbols on products are becoming more and more prevalent he wouldn’t starve! The breakfast menu included cereals, pancakes, waffles, muffins, pre-cut fruits and vegetables, hardboiled eggs, as well as hot coffee and juices. Can Yosef eat anything offered on the Continental Breakfast menu, or should he prepare his own breakfast using the microwave and coffeemaker in his hotel room?

Chana’s brother’s bat-mitzvah, held in a hotel during Shabbos, turned out to be a real nightmare! The closet light went on automatically when she opened the closet door; the housekeeper had turned off the light in her room, preventing her from reviewing her Parsha notes; she drank a bottle of water from her room’s “refreshment bar”, which was set off an electric sensor; and her bathroom’s toilet and sink were not controlled by an electric eye. These were just some of the many Shabbos issues Chana faced. How could she have prevented them?

We live in a time in which keeping a kosher home is relatively easy. However, when travel plans interrupt our regular routine, we frequently encounter situations we do not normally experience at home. In this article, we will outline how to deal with some of the challenges facing Jewish hotel guests.

Our discussion focuses on hotels in the U.S. that are not kosher certified. Staying at a kosher certified hotel alleviates many of the issues mentioned here. However, the consumer should be aware that while some kosher agencies ensure that the entire hotel experience is “kosher,” including the food, other agencies may certify the food only. They may not feel it is their responsibility to ensure that the entire bedroom, the swimming pool or other amenities are halachically acceptable.

Kashrus

Continental Breakfast – Many hotels offer a variety of foods for breakfast. Prepared foods (e.g. pancakes, waffles, or bakery items) may not be eaten due to the ingredients and preparation utensils used; however, fresh whole fruits or any sealed item bearing a reliable kosher symbol may be eaten. Plastic cutlery may be available upon request for guests to cut their produce. Pre-cut fruits or vegetables should be avoided, since they may have been cut with a knife that was used for non-kosher food. Cooked eggs, even in their shells (hard/medium/soft boiled), are forbidden due to Bishul Akum. Unflavored coffee is acceptable, as is milk (for those who drink milk that is not Cholov Yisroel). Hot water from an urn may be used.

Kosher Meals – Hotels may be able to order kosher frozen “airline meals” upon request. Some hotels keep them in their inventory, should the need arise. The hotel must leave the wrapping intact for the guest.
Microwave – One must assume that hotel room microwaves have been used for non-kosher food products. Therefore, any kosher food that is heated within them must be enclosed in two separate leakproof wrappings.

Refrigerator – One may use a clean refrigerator in which to store kosher food. Meat, fish, and non-mevushal wine require a proper seal if they are left alone while the guest is away and the room is to be cleaned.6

Coffeemaker in Room – Many hotel rooms provide a coffeemaker and kosher coffee; however, it is suggested that one should not use the coffeemaker. Although most people who stay in hotels do not pack food to heat up in the carafe (this is generally a kosher traveler phenomenon), it is still possible that it was used for non-kosher products. Therefore, it is recommended that one refrain from using the carafe.

Some hotels now have coffeemakers without carafes. The hotel provides individual hot cups into which the coffee drips. The machine is used for coffee only and, therefore, one may make coffee in this type of machine.7

Ice Maker – One is allowed to use the ice in the hotel, as the ice machines are dedicated to making ice.8

Passover – A hotel kitchenette requires the same method of koshering for Passover as a home kitchen. Please consult the Star-K Passover Guide for more information. Kosherization must be completed before Passover.

One who is staying at a hotel and did not bring any chometz into the room should perform bedikas chometz without a brocha.8 Some hotel rooms have a “mini-bar” that is pre-stocked with drinks and snacks by the hotel. If there are food items in the mini-bar which are not kosher for Passover, one should ensure that the staff removes those items. Alternatively, the mini-bar should be sealed off and the staff informed that the guest bears no responsibility for those items.9 Ice from the icemaker may be used, but the ice bucket in the room should not be used. The coffeemaker also may not be used.

SHABBOS (includes Yom Tov unless otherwise noted)

One must check with the hotel prior to his Shabbos stay, in order to assess whether or not he will encounter any of the issues described below. He should then devise a course of action through which he can avoid or circumvent their occurrence. Upon arriving at the hotel, he should meet with the personnel to discuss his special needs. Oftentimes, staff is very willing to cooperate when approached in a friendly manner. For example, housekeeping should be asked not to turn on or off the lights in the hotel room on Shabbos morning; rather, they should leave the lights as they found them upon entering the room. (Putting out the “Do Not Disturb” sign should prevent the staff from entering the room.)

Sensors for Lights and Heating/Air-Conditioning – Guests tend to leave the heating and air conditioners running while they are away from the room; therefore, some hotels are installing energy-efficient thermostats. When it senses that the room is unoccupied, the thermostat adjusts the climate to an energy-efficient setting. When the guest opens the door to re-enter the room, the thermostat readjusts to the original setting. The sensor may also turn the lights on or off, depending upon whether or not someone is in the room. It can also alert housekeeping that the room is empty and may be cleaned. One may not stay in such a room on Shabbos unless these sensors are disabled by the staff prior to Shabbos.10

Pre-stocked Refrigerator – The hotel room may have a pre-stocked “mini-bar”. The hotel charges a per item fee for each refreshment product that is used by the customer. Generally, the housekeeping staff is responsible for monitoring these items. In this case, it would be permitted to remove a product from the bar during Shabbos, since such assessment would not be performed at that time.11 The purchase is recorded and charged whenever the staff checks the room.

Some hotels now use electronic sensors which confirm each sale at the time of purchase and automatically post charges to the guest’s account. In this case, since the customer is directly initiating the purchase, as well as the electronic recording, no product may be removed during Shabbos.

Hot Food – It is a mitzvah to eat hot food on Shabbos, especially for the daytime meal. If the hotel is amenable, one may use a hotplate in his room and place cooked food on it before Shabbos.13

Many hotels offer morning coffee to their guests. If the hotel caters to non-Jewish clientele, then we may assume that the coffee is prepared for them and nothing is added for the Jews who comprise the minority of the guests. In this case, one may partake of the coffee even on Shabbos.14 However, if there is a contingent of Jews staying at the hotel, and there is a special place such as a “Kiddush room” set aside for them, then the coffee there would not be permitted to those individuals on Shabbos; however, it would be permitted on Yom Tov.

Electronic Locks and Doors – Although electronic door locks have become commonplace, certain hotels, especially near large Orthodox communities, still have a few rooms set aside that use a key and it is worthwhile to attempt to find these. Although electronic card keys may not be used and are muktza on Shabbos,
guests may leave them at the front desk before Shabbos, and then on Shabbos ask non-Jewish staff members to open their door.15

When walking into or out of the hotel, one should use manual non-electronic doors. Service or staff doors are likely to be non-electronic, and may be available to guests with special authorization. If there are no manual doors, one should wait until a non-Jew opens the electric-eye door with his movement and then proceed through the doorway. Due to the difficulty of coordinating one’s movements with those of another person, caution should be taken to avoid unwittingly activating the door.

Bathrooms – Hotels may be equipped with sinks and toilets that are controlled by an electric eye, particularly in the lobby. The bathroom may have automated lights that are activated when the door is opened or one walks into the room. We suggest avoiding hotels on Shabbos that do not offer a different system.16

As always, toilet paper should be prepared before Shabbos. Boxes of tissues should be checked to ensure that the tissues are separated from one another (some might be perforated but not separated).

Security Cameras – There may be security cameras in the hotel. It is best to avoid being videoced by such cameras on Shabbos, since the image is projected onto a screen. However, if this is difficult to avoid and one has no interest in being seen by the cameras, then he is permitted to walk past them.17

Shabbos Candles – Even if one lights many candles at home, common custom allows the lighting of two candles while away.18 If one will be eating in the hotel’s dining room, he should arrange to light the candles near the table where he will be dining.19 An electric light should also be left on in the hotel room (or bathroom, if it can shed light in the room) so that one will not stumble in the dark.20 If it is not possible to light candles in the dining room, or if one is eating in his own room, then he should light the candles in his sleeping quarters. (Do not leave the candles unattended.)21 If the hotel does not allow the lighting of candles in the room due to the potential fire hazard, then Halacha prohibits one to light there.22 Instead, one should light, with a brocha, an electric incandescent lamp or an incandescent flashlight23 in his room.

A man who is away from home in a hotel room cannot rely upon his wife’s lighting candles at home, and is obligated in hadlulas neiros with a brocha.24

Carrying – An Eruv Chatzeiros might be necessary to permit carrying within the hotel premises (e.g. from a room to an enclosed hallway) on Shabbos. One should check with his Rav.25 However, if there is only one Jew or Jewish family among the hotel guests, an Eruv Chatzeiros is not needed.26 A motel is usually comprised of rooms that open up to the outdoors. Since there is no proper enclosure, one may not carry outside of his room.

Elevators – Hotels are often comprised of many floors. Use of an elevator involves a number of issues, including:27

1. Elevator doors are equipped with a mechanism which prevents them from closing when people are in the elevator entranceway. One who triggers this mechanism is transgressing a Shabbos prohibition.

2. One generally presses a button to reach a specific floor. This starts the elevator and may cause the button to illuminate. Therefore, if at all possible, one should book a guest room on a lower floor so that he does not require use of the elevator on Shabbos. If there is no alternative, he may use the elevator by entering immediately after a non-Jew to avoid activating the door through the electric eye. (This is not easily accomplished since due to limited space, the electric eye might unfortunately be triggered.) He should not ask anyone to press a button for him; rather, he should exit on the nearest level and walk to the desired floor.

In some elevators, a buzzer sounds every time a person breaks through the electric eye. Therefore, entering after a non-Jew is not a viable solution since the buzzer will sound as the Jew enters. One who requires use of this type of elevator may ask a non-Jew to stand in the doorway.

In case of need, one may use a “Shabbos elevator” which stops on each floor and remains open for a short while. One should enter or exit the elevator as soon as the door opens. He should not block the elevator doorway, as this will activate the electric eye.

Escalators – May be used on Shabbos.28

DAVENING

A man should try to arrange his hotel stay in an area where he will be able to attend a minyan. If there is a minyan within 18 minutes of his hotel, then he is obligated to attend that minyan. If he does daven by himself, he should daven Shemona Esray at the same time as the local minyan.29 One should face towards Jerusalem. If he cannot determine the proper direction, then he should mentally gear his thoughts towards Jerusalem. One should not daven facing a mirror or painting. According to some authorities, if there is a Gideon Bible in the room, it should be placed in a drawer prior to davening.30

We eagerly await the days of Moshiach, when “each man will rest securely under his grape vine and palm tree”.31 At that time, people will not need to vacation in a hotel for pleasure, as the home will provide complete spiritual and physical contentment.

The author thanks Abby Fitzpatrick of Sheraton Hotels for her assistance in preparation for this article.

To comment on this article, email Rabbi Goldberg at hotelguide@star-k.org
produce white wines. The fundamental difference between the red and white wines is the length of time the grape skins remain in the grape “must”. Grape skins that are left in the fermentation vats for a week to absorb the purple color produce red wine; white wine is produced from “must” that ferments without grape skins.

The by-products of the wine production - the grape skins, the grape seeds and the stems - are separated and sold to companies called distilleries. These companies process the grape by-products into an array of products, including wine alcohol, grape skin extracts, colors, and tannins to name but a few. The grape seeds are a derivative of the by-product and are transported to a variety of companies for further processing.

In order for the distillery to retrieve the grape by-products, the “marc” i.e. the seeds, stems, and skins need to be washed. The washing retrieves the remaining wine that was not pressed out at the winery, while cleaning the grape seeds in the process. Some distilleries use hot water, at approximately 140° F, while others use ambient (room temperature) water. The seeds are then dried to approximately 8% moisture. Considering the fact that a kernel of rice contains 11% moisture, and wheat is harvested at approximately 14% moisture, suffice it to say that 8% is fairly dry. After drying, the seeds are ready to be sent to the extraction plant for further processing.

It was mind boggling to observe the deliveries of grape seeds at the Bezier, France extraction facility. Trailer after trailer, measuring 15 ft high and 25 ft long, were loaded with dried grape seeds ready to be processed. The Bezier facility is the only grape seed oil extraction facility in France. It is supplied by the 22 distilleries that process the grape by-products of this country that prides itself on its award winning wine production. Understandably, this facility works non-stop 365 days a year to produce crude grape seed oil. 8,000 tons of grape seeds are extracted from 50,000 tons of grape seeds!

As previously noted, there are two methods of extracting crude oil. One technique is mechanical extraction, whereby the oil is extruded from the seed, bean or fruit. This method is used to express cocoa butter and oils such as corn, soybeans and sunflower. It is also the process utilized to produce cold pressed extra virgin olive oil. However, grape seed oil is removed through a process known as solvent extraction. A solvent, in this case hexane, is used to remove the edible oil from the grape seed. How is this accomplished? The grape seeds undergo a process called laminating, which crushes the seeds in a roller and cuts them into pieces so that the surface area is exposed. The crushed seeds are injected with steam and then advance through an extruder. The pieces are then fused together and look like pieces of a black electrical cord or smooth sticks. The laminated grape seeds are then immersed in a bath of cascading hexane, which washes out the grape seed oil.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7
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CONSUMER PRODUCTS
(only when bearing Star-K symbol)
ADRIA IMPORTS, INC.
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BAKER'S CHOICE
Spring Valley, NY
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BARRIE HOUSE
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Yorkers, NY
SWEETENERS
BLUE MARBLE BRANDS
Edison, NJ
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BRUNO SCHEIDT, INC.
New York, NY
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COMPASS FOOD SALES
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FRUIT (DRIED)
CUSTOM CONCENTRATES
East Rutherford, NJ
COFFEE BEANS; COFFEE
EDIBLE ARRANGEMENTS #1131
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FAMILY FOOD
Kapolei, HI
OILS/Olive OILS
FEED YOUR SOUL COOKIES
Jersey City, NJ
COOKIES
FIBER GOURMET
Miami Beach, FL
SUGAR
GIANT EAGLE
Pittsburgh, PA
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GUANGXI YULIN FAMILY
LOVE FOOD CO. LTD.
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SNACK FOODS
HUNAN CHIC FOODS
CHINA
FRUIT (CANNED)
IMBIBE, INC.
Wilmette, IL
BAKING MIXES, DRY MIXES
INFOST FINE FOODS
INTERNATIONAL
PICKLED PRODUCTS
INTERNATIONAL TRADE CORP.
North Bergen, NJ
VEGETABLES (CANNED)
KARDEA NUTRITION
Hamden, CT
OILS/Olive OILS
LIMSON TRADEING, INC.
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VEGETABLES (CANNED)
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CHINA
FRUIT (CANNED); VEGETABLES (CANNED)

MITSUI FOODS, INC.
Norwood, NJ
VEGETABLES (CANNED)
MONTANA MONSTER MUNCHIES, LLC
Bozeman, MT
SPECIALTY COOKIES
MOORE BAKERY COMPANY
Baltimore, MD
BAKERY
PURE INTERNATIONAL FOODS
TURKEY
VEGETABLES (DRIED)
ROYAL FOOD IMPORT CORP.
Boston, MA
FRUIT (CANNED)
RX NATURAL USA, INC.
Long Island City, NY
TEAS
S&I INDUSTRIES
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S & B FOOD SALES
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SAVORY PIE CO., INC.
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NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS
TARGET CORPORATION
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FRUIT (CANNED)
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GA.
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CANADA
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TURKEY
FRUIT (DRIED)
BESLEN MAKARANA
GIDA SAN VE TIC AS
TURKEY
PASTA PRODUCTS
CELIKLER GIDA SAN TIC. LTD. STI.
TURKEY
JAMS; PRESERVES, TEHINA
C.H.C.I.
TURKEY
OILS/OLIVE OILS; OLIVES
CHANGSHA GOURMET INTERNATIONAL TRADE CORP.
CHINA
FRUIT (CANNED); VEGETABLES (CANNED)
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DETERGENTS & CLEANSERS
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FRUIT (CANNED)
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ISRAEL
PICKLED VEGETABLES
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INDIA
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HOMREL
Austin, MN
VITAMINS, SUPPLEMENTS & NUTRITIONAL
HUNAN CHIC FOODS
CHINA
FRUIT (CANNED)
IKHLAS EXTRACTION
MOOROCCO
OILS/Olive OILS
INDIAN TROPICAL AGRO PRODUCTS (P) LTD.
INDIA
PICKLED PRODUCTS
INTECO INTERNATIONAL TRADE CORP.
North Bergen, NJ
FRUIT (CANNED)
LABORATORIO CATARINENSE S.A.
BRAZIL
HERBAL EXTRACTS
LINSHU A&F FOODS
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FRUIT (DEHYDRATED, DRIED, FROZEN); VEGETABLES (DEHYDRATED, DRIED, FROZEN)
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CHINA
FRUIT (CANNED); VEGETABLES (CANNED)
LONGKOU TAIHE FOODSTUFF FACTORY
CHINA
FRUIT (DRIED)
MELZER CHEMICALS
INDIA
WATER TREATMENT CHEMICALS
MIVILA FOODS
Patterson, NJ
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NINGBO ZHUZHIYUN
FOOD CO., LTD.
CHINA
FRUIT (CANNED)
NINGXIA DADE TRADING CO. LTD.
CHINA
VEGETABLES (DRIED)
NOVO AGRICTHEM LTD.
INDIA
ESSENTIAL OILS & OLEORESINS; TEA
OLEOFATS INC.
PHILIPPINES
OILS/Olve OILS
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CHINA
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SHANDONG DONGCHEN BIOMEDICAL
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CHINA
AMINO ACIDS
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NEW UNDER STAR-D
(only when bearing Star-D symbol)
The Star-D is a kosher symbol of the National Council of Young Israel (NCYI). The Star-D is only for products that are dairy – chalav yisrael (non-cholov yisrael).

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Jackson, MI
CROSSANTS
EDIBLE ARRANGEMENTS #1131
Baltimore, MD
FRUITS (FRESH PACKAGED); GIFT BASKETS
MONTANA MONSTER MUNCHIES, LLC
Bozeman, MT
SPECIALTY COOKIES
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Star-K 7th Annual Kashrus Training Program

Star-K’s Kashrus Training Program will be held July 12 through July 15, 2010. This intensive seminar, held at Star-K’s offices in Baltimore, Maryland, is limited to 25 students – rabbinon, kollel fellows, and others serving as klei kedesh— who have studied Yoreh Deah.

To apply call the Star-K office at 410-484-4110 and speak with Rabbi Zev Goldberg or go to www.star-k.com to download the application form.
Q: I am the mother of a young baby. The Size 1 Pampers diapers have a yellow stripe which turns blue to indicate that the baby should be changed. Can this diaper be used on Shabbos?

A: It is forbidden to feed non-kosher food to a child, even if that child has not yet reached the age of chinuch, as one is prohibited to directly cause a child to perpetrate an issur. Similarly, it would seem that, regarding the above question, one is causing the child to transgress the melacha of tzviah, dyeing, on Shabbos. However, this case should not be compared to that of feeding treif to a child. The prohibition of performing melacha on Shabbos is violated only when it is a meleches machsheves, the person who carries out the melacha must be aware of his actions. This is in contrast to the issur of eating non-kosher food, where the prohibition has been violated even if the person was unaware that the food he ate was not kosher. Since the baby has no knowledge of the diaper’s color change, using such a diaper would not be comparable to feeding him non-kosher food.

Even though the baby has no knowledge of his actions, the adult who is changing the baby is certainly aware of what he is doing. He knows that by using the diaper in question, he is causing the yellow stripe to eventually turn blue. One could argue that this is analogous to putting grain in a mill on Shabbos. It is forbidden to put grain in a running watermill on Shabbos, since he is placing the grain in a location where it will eventually be crushed, thereby transgressing the issur of tochen. Similarly, in the case of the diaper he is causing the melacha of tzviah to occur. However, there is a significant distinction between our case of the diaper and that of the mill. In the latter instance, the water which will cause the grain to be crushed already exists, and it is just a matter of time until the melacha takes place. In the former instance, however, the agent which will cause the color change in the diaper does not yet exist.

A more accurate comparison to our case would be the following: On Yom Tov, a person is permitted to place a lit candle in an open area where no wind is currently blowing, even though he knows that eventually a strong gust of wind will extinguish the flame. Regarding this halachah, the Rema differentiates between Yom Tov and Shabbos. He states that if one will not incur a loss by leaving a fire burning on Shabbos, he should not perform any action which will cause the flame to be extinguished. Therefore, it could be argued that on Shabbos one should not place the diaper in a position where tzviah will take place.

However, the Rema was stringent specifically in a situation where a person’s intent in performing a particular action is to extinguish the flame. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt”l suggests that the Rema would be lenient if the person’s intention was not to extinguish the flame. For this reason, we need to differentiate between someone who buys a diaper specifically for the features it offers – a color change indicating when a baby would need to be changed – and someone who simply buys whatever diaper is available, regardless of its particular features. The stringency of the Rema would not apply if neither he nor the baby have any need for the color change, and he is buying the diaper simply because it is available.

Rav Heinemann shl”a suggests that there is further reason to be lenient in the case of the diaper with a color-changing stripe. Rav Moshe Feinstein zt”l states that, on Shabbos, one is allowed to wear photo-gray glasses which darken when exposed to sunlight, even though walking outside will cause the lens to change color. Similarly, Rav Moshe Feinstein told Rav Heinemann that a person is allowed to sit in the sun on Shabbos, even though by doing so he is causing his skin to tan and change color. Since the person is merely engaging in an everyday activity and the color change is incidental, he would not be performing an act of tzviah, as this is not the derech of the melacha. If so, it could be argued that even a person who desires the color change feature would be permitted to use the diaper on Shabbos.

Nevertheless, Rav Heinemann pushens that someone should preferably not use such a diaper on Shabbos if it was bought particularly because of its color changing feature. He may, however, use such a diaper if this particular feature is insignificant to him.

Halachic queries regarding all topics may be presented to The Institute of Halachah at the Star-K by calling 410-484-4110 ext. 238 or emailing halachah@star-k.org.
At the distillery, where the “marc” is washed in hot water and the seeds are separated, the hot water cooks the seeds in the wine residue. This would be the second disqualification.

The Shulchan Aruch discusses the two criteria for permitting grape seeds, tannamdan, washing of the seeds and yibush, drying of the seeds to a point where the seeds are moistureless. This is similar to the drying of the wine sediments on the side of the cask (Weinstein), the basic ingredient of cream of tartar. In the distillery, the seeds are definitely washed and dried well. This is critical because if a wet seed were to become moldy, the oil would not be able to be extracted. Furthermore, prior to extraction the seeds are dried once again during lamination. The question remains: Does a seed that has originally been soaked and cooked in non-kosher wine prior to washing, drying, and re-drying qualify as kosher grape seed oil?

The Shulchan Aruch clearly states that grape seeds are forbidden to be used within the first 12 months of their separation from the “must”. Furthermore, the halacha states that the seeds need to be washed and free of any residual wine before the 12 month count can be successful. Moreover, does the drying of the seeds equal a 12 month waiting period? Similarly, the question was raised regarding the wine sediment which is the main ingredient of cream of tartar. Does the drying of the wine lees, the wine sediment, qualify for the 12 month waiting period? Many authorities maintain that it does.

Another opinion in favor of grape seed oil is that the oil bears no resemblance to the original grape seed in smell, taste, color or texture. The Chasam Sofer rules that since there is a complete transformation from grape seeds to oil, the prohibition of disqualified grape seeds does not apply. This is based upon the ruling of Rabbeinu Yona, who maintained that a forbidden item that has undergone a complete transformation is permitted. Moreover, the Pischei Teshuva which quotes the Chasam Sofer adds that an additional caveat to permit grape seed oil is that the lamination of seeds takes place after the hexane is poured onto the cut seeds. The Chelbas Yaakov offers yet another reason to permit grape seed oil. Oil is contained inside the seed, and the wine is not converted into oil; therefore, it can be viewed as two separate entities.

It is the position of the Star-K, as well as other major kashrus agencies, to permit grape seed oil that is manufactured in this manner. It is indeed a great manifestation of the Ribono Shel Olam’s masterful handwork to see the mysteries that can be found in nature, and the versatility of the fruits of Hashem’s labor.

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1 Yoreh Deah (Y.D.) 123:17
2 YD 123:14
3 YD 123:16
4 Pischer Teshuva (Y.D.) 123:20

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This year, Haddar Chabura Shmura Matzos are the only matzos certified by Star-K. These matzos adhere to the strictest 18 minute standard. The 18 minutes are calculated from the time the water is first poured onto the flour, until the very last matza of that batch is put into the oven. Please be aware that not all 18 minute matzos are the same. Most brands calculate the 18 minute interval so that the actual time is significantly greater than 18 minutes.

All of the mehadrim machine matzah bakeries possess very reliable kosher supervision. However, the kosher consumer should realize that not all mehadrim machine matzos are created equal.

For more information, visit the Star-K website by typing www.star-k.org/con-kash-kurrent.htm and selecting the Spring 2009, Vol. 29 No. 1 issue of Kashrus Kurrents. “Machine Matzos: Timing is Everything.”
Star-K Kosher Certification
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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
Footnotes to The Traveler’s Halachic Guide to Hotels

1 As Israeli hotels, other issues arise. For example, even raw fruit may not be eaten without kosher certification since itching and shmotz need to be addressed.

2 Strawberries, blackberries and raspberries, as well as potentially infested vegetables, should be checked before consuming.

3 See Sheelos Shabbos 3:2 indicating that one who is traveling on the road may be more lenient in this regard.

4 One may inquire with management if covering the sensor before removing coffee from the machine, and that water does not enter the machine.

5 Handicapped rooms have different toilets than regular rooms and may possibly be non-electric. Inquire with the staff.

6 One should ensure that no lights are activated when removing coffee from the machine, and that water does not enter the machine.

7 As is a chashuv d’vudus b’makom mitzvah or oneg Shabbos. Activating the lock mechanism is an issue of din. One should not ask the non-Jew to open the door for minor reasons.

8 Generally, all hotel staff members are knowledgeable.


10 Ray Moshe Heinemann (also cited in Orchos Shabbos 13: note 55).

11 One may inquire with management if covering the sensor before Shabbos will solve this problem.

12 Shulchan Aruch O.C. 323:4. All halachos regarding opening packages on Shabbos must be followed. Unflavored bottled water does not require kosher certification.

13 On Yeim Tov cooking is allowed.

14 See Sheelos Shabbos Kehilchusa (S.S.K.) 30:48. One must ensure that no lights are activated when removing coffee from the machine, and that water does not enter automatically when coffee is removed. As mentioned above, unflavored coffee is acceptable without certification.

15 As this is a chashuv d’vudus b’makom mitzvah or oneg Shabbos. Activating the lock mechanism is an issue of din. One should not ask the non-Jew to open the door for minor reasons.

16 Handicapped rooms have different toilets than regular rooms and may possibly be non-electric. Inquire with the staff. It should be noted that some closets have an automatic light that is activated when the closet door is opened.


18 S.S.K. 43:3. One would also fulfill the mitzvah with one candle.

19 S.S.K. 45:9. See note 44 where he frowns upon lighting in a separate room near the dining room.

20 M.B. 265:2.

21 One should not light candles if the smoke detector will be activated. However, a knowledgeable hotel staff member stated to the author that in their hotel, lighting candles is not prohibited and the smoke detectors would not be activated due to merely one or two candles.

22 One should ensure that there are fresh batteries in the flashlight so that they will last until after dark.

23 Tosos Halides 38:22, Chovas Hadar pg 88. A man recites the brocha before lighting.

24 An “eruv chutzeros” refers to matea or broad sea aside to allow carrying between different areas inside, and is distinct from what is commonly called an “eruv”, constructed of poles and wire which allows carrying outside.

25 This question hinges on a dispute between the Igros Moshe (O.C. 1:14) who permits carrying without an eruv chutzeros in a hotel, and the Dvar Avraham (3:30) who takes a strict approach. In any event, no brocha is recited in deference to the opinion of Igros Moshe.

26 Shulchan Aruch O.C. 382:1 and M.B. 5. Unless one knows otherwise, one may not ask the other guests are not Jewish.

27 S.S.K. 23:49 writing that going down in an elevator is more problematic than going up.

28 New York City: one should be aware that unfiltered water may contain copepods - small but visible crustaceans.

29 Chovas Hadar 38:2.

30 The rooms may be like a mukhoh sh’tan hamahcim kumah. One must also check his car, clothes pockets, and luggage, without a brocha. For further discussion, see P海外 tovos 437:1.

31 One may inquire with management if covering the sensor before Shabbos will solve this problem.

32 Shulchan Aruch O.C. 323:4. All halachos regarding opening packages on Shabbos must be followed. Unflavored bottled water does not require kosher certification.

33 Rema Y.D.96:4 is lenient under certain circumstances; however, those conditions are not fulfilled in a hotel setting.

34 For further details, see Orchos Chaim 90:16, Kehulas Yisakor - Brochos 3, Halichos Shlomo 5:18, Shevet Halevi 15, note 55.

35 Eishel Nachshon 2: note 12c citing Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach.

36 Igros Moshe 1:14.

37 Mrs. Pesi Herskovitz
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