

Kashrus Kurrents

VOLUME 40 NO. 3

Summer 5778-2018

A HALACHIC GUIDE TO Sheva Brachos

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Chazal tell us that Moshe Rabeinu established the “shivas y’mai hamishteh”, the seven days during which the choson and kallah rejoice together following their wedding.¹ During this time, family and friends come together and prepare beautiful seudos, followed by the recitation of the “Sheva Brochos” at the conclusion of Birchas Hamazon. Such seudos are quite common, and it is important to review the various applicable halachos.²

What is Necessary For Sheva Brochos

If a choson and kallah are at a meal held in their honor during the first seven days of their marriage, and there is a minyan present, including a panim chadashos, Sheva Brochos are recited. The following is an explanation of what is required:

1. *Minyan* - At least seven adult males over the age of Bar Mitzvah eat enough bread that requires Birchas Hamazon,³ and at least three others eat enough food (e.g., cake, fruit, etc.) or drink a beverage (except water or seltzer) that requires a Brocha Acharona.⁴ The choson can be counted as one of the ten men.⁵ The choson and kallah should also eat enough bread that requires Birchas Hamazon.⁶

2. The Choson and Kallah are present - If the choson and kallah arrive late to their Sheva Brochos, the Sheva Brochos can be recited as long as they eat with everyone else, or at least when everyone can still potentially partake of the seudah or dessert. However, if they walk in after the guests have decided to recite Birchas Hamazon, or have washed mayim acharonim, it is too late.⁷ Sheva Brochos may be recited even if the choson and kallah ate

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1. Rambam, Hilchos Avel 1:l based on Yerushalmi Kesubos 1:l, which also says that Moshe Rabeinu established the seven days of mourning.
 2. This article is based on the psak of Harav Moshe Heinemann, shlita, Rabbinic Administrator of STAR-K, and covers the halachos of the seudas Sheva Brochos, not the Sheva Brochos recited under the chupah which is beyond the scope of this article. An additional discussion regarding various aspects of Sheva Brochos can be found in STAR-K’s Insights from the Institute by Rabbi Mordechai Frankel, Spring 2013.
 3. K’zayis b’chdai achilas pras, 1.33 fl. oz. (40 ml), within a span of less than 4 minutes.
 4. Sefer Sová S’machos 16. This is the same requirement necessary at a regular meal for the one who leads Birchas Hamazon, and those who respond to add the word “Elokainu”. This is not to be confused with the requirement for a “minyan” for davening (e.g., to recite Chazaras Hashatz), when only six mispallelim are required and four additional adult males who are not currently davening can be mitztaref. For example, after Sheva Brochos a minyan to daven can be formed even if four of the ten males present already davened that tefilah.
 5. Shulchan Aruch Even Ha’ezer [EH] 62:4
 6. If this is not possible (e.g., due to an illness or allergy), consult a rav. See Sefer Birchas Chasanim (S.B.C.) 3:5 by Harav Nissan Kaplan, shlita.
 7. S.B.C. 3:l3. If there are only between 3 and 9 men in attendance (i.e., no minyan), or if either of the following individuals leaves before or during the recitation of the Sheva Brochos, a rav should be consulted as to how to proceed: The choson or kallah, the panim chadashos, or the “10th man” (i.e., there is no longer a minyan).

Kosher Wine COMES OF AGE

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Throughout the ages, alcohol has always played a vital role in historical and religious observance. Dovid Hamelech’s declaration ויין ישמח לבב אנוש¹ “Wine will gladden the hearts of humanity,” certainly has borne itself out in modern history. Wine accompanies happy occasions in almost every society known to man. Chazal declare אין שמחה אלא ביוין.²

When I was growing up, there weren’t many choices when it came to kosher wine. When my parents bought our childhood home, my father was thrilled to find that it came with a wine cellar. He was then faced with the formidable challenge of finding kosher wine good enough to bother storing. I remember a time when there were only two wines from Eretz Yisroel available, both from Carmel Chateau Rishon: Vin Rouge and Vin Blanc; basically, the whole range was sweet red and white! Domestic wines were even more limited; while there were a few different brands available,³ Extra Heavy Red Concord was basically all that could be had.

I remember both children and adults making funny faces at Kiddush when drinking the small shot glass of wine they felt religiously obligated to endure. No such reactions were evident at a Kiddush when schnapps, herring, and kichel were served!

However, over the past 30 years kosher wine has experienced a tremendous resurgence in quality, variety and quantity. Since the days of my father, the challenge of searching for good kosher wine to store in our wine cellar has developed into the pursuit of wine that is actually worthy of being stored. A recent online search⁴ revealed over 1000 different kosher wines available in the United States produced from a wide range of European countries, in addition to South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Eretz Yisroel. Noteworthy is the emergence of Israel as a world leader in wine production, not only for the resurgence of this ancient Jewish industry but also for its significance as a harbinger of the coming of Moshiach (Sotah 49).

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1. תהלים ק”ד, ט”ו.
 2. מסכת קט ע”א.
 3. Some readers may remember some of the many kosher wine companies in the Lower East Side of Manhattan selling this ubiquitous varietal (Schapiro’s, Hersh’s, Lifshitz’s, Baumgarten’s, Ganeles-Lenger - to name just a few).
 4. Search captured at www.kosherwine.com on June 10, 2018 at 10:12 a.m.

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A HALACHIC GUIDE TO *Sheva Brachos*

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in different rooms in the same house (e.g., the *choson* is with the men and the *kallah* is with the women), however, the *kallah* should be with the *choson* during *Birchas Hamazon* and *Sheva Brochos*.⁸

3. *Panim Chadashos*⁹ - This is someone who was not at the *seudah* of the wedding¹⁰ and was not at a previous *seudas Sheva Brochos* held in honor of this *choson* and *kallah*. He can be a *panim chadashos* even if he attended the *chupah*. However, if he attended any part of the wedding *seudah* or dancing (even without eating), or any previous *Sheva Brochos seudah* for this *choson* and *kallah*, he cannot be considered a *panim chadashos*.¹¹ Ideally, he should partake of the *seudah*, or at least eat *chameishes minei dagan* that requires a *Mezonos*.¹² On *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov*,¹³ a *panim chadashos* is not required¹⁴ at the first two meals. A *panim chadashos* is also not required at *seudah shlishis*¹⁵ on *Shabbos* if *divrei Torah* are delivered.¹⁶ Ideally, the *panim chadashos* is someone who increases the *simcha* of the *choson* and *kallah*. *B'dieved*, we consider anyone attending to be a *panim chadashos*, as long as he is not an "adam bazoy".¹⁷

4. Seven Days - If it is the first marriage¹⁸ for either the *choson* or *kallah*, the *y'mai hamishte* take place for seven days.¹⁹ During this time, the *choson* and *kallah* do not work, but rather spend the time together for the duration of *Sheva Brochos*.²⁰ A *Sheva Brochos seudah* can be made any time during these *shivvas y'mai hamishte*.²¹ It should be noted that there is no obligation to have *Sheva Brochos* for the *choson* and *kallah* every day.

The way to calculate seven days is as follows: The day of the *chupah* is Day #1, regardless of what time of day²² the *chupah* takes place. *Sheva Brochos* may be recited until sunset of Day #7. For example, if the wedding takes place on Sunday night in the winter, Monday is considered Day #1 and *Sheva Brochos* may be recited until sunset of the following Sunday.²³ If the wedding

is on Sunday afternoon at 4:00 p.m. (i.e., before sunset), Sunday is considered Day #1 and *Shabbos* is Day #7. Therefore, in such a case the *Sheva Brochos* of *seudah shlishis* must be completed before sunset on *Shabbos* (i.e., before the end of Day #7). This is true, even if *seudah shlishis* begins before sunset. This is different than reciting "Retzai" (or *Yaaleh v'Yavo*), which is recited even after it gets dark, provided the meal started before sunset on *Shabbos* (or *Yom Tov*).

If *Shabbos* is not Day #7 (i.e., it is between Days #2 and #6), regular *Sheva Brochos* are recited even after *tzais hakochavim* on *Motzai Shabbos*, and the *mezamen* and *choson* and *kallah* may drink the wine.²⁴

In regards to other *halachos* of *shivvas y'mai hamishte*, including not going to work and exempting the *tzibur* from *Tachanun*, the seven days are "mei'ays l'ays" until exactly one week after the *chupah*.²⁵ For example, assume someone got married on a Thursday in the summer and the *chupah* ended at 7:30 p.m. (i.e., before sunset). If the *choson* is in *shul* for *Shacharis* on the following Thursday morning, the entire *minyan* would not say *Tachnun*. Furthermore, *Tachnun* at *Mincha* that day would also not be recited by those who are at the *minyan* that the *choson* attends, if it is before 7:30 p.m.²⁶ This is true, even though *Sheva Brochos* can only be recited until *shkia* the night before (i.e., until sunset on Wednesday).

Reciting *Birchas Hamazon* and *Sheva Brochos*

Before *Birchas HaMazon*, place three *kosos* (cups)²⁷ on the table. One *kos* is for the one who leads *Birchas Hamazon* and the second one is for *Sheva Brochos*.²⁸ The third *kos* will be used to mix *Kos #1* with *Kos #2*.²⁹ The first *kos* is filled and the *mezamen* leads the *bentching*, adding *D'vai Hasair*.³⁰ However, most do not say *D'vai Hasair* on *Shabbos*, *Yom Tov* or *Chol Hamoed*.³¹ This is because it relates to the *churban Bais Hamikdash*.³² The

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8. *Yam Shel Shlomo* (Ksubos Perek 1, Siman 20)

9. Literally meaning "new faces". Although a *panim chadashos* must be present, he is not required to recite any of the *Sheva Brochos*.

10. *Shulchan Aruch* E.H. 62:7

11. S.B.C. 46-9

12. If he does not eat, he must be someone who will definitely increase the *simcha* of the *choson* and *kallah* (S.B.C. 4:13).

13. A *panim chadashos* is necessary on *Chol Hamoed*, *Rosh Chodesh*, *Purim* and *Chanukah*.

14. *Shulchan Aruch* E.H. 62:8. This is because *Shabbos* itself is a *panim chadashos* (*Tosfos* Ksubos 7b-V'hu). If there is no *panim chadashos* on a weekday, under certain conditions only the *brocha* of "Asher Barah" is recited (in addition to "Borei Pri Hagafen").

15. This is true, even if *Birchas Hamazon* (i.e., with *Retzai*) is recited after *shkia* (See S.B.C. 4:11).

16. In this case, some are *makpid* that the *choson* says *divrei Torah* (S.B.C. 4:11 in the name of *Rav Elyashiv* *zt"l*).

17. A non-desirable individual. For a full discussion of who can be considered *panim chadashos*, see *Sefer Hanisuin K'hilchasa* 14:49-69.

18. This means that either the *choson* or *kallah* was never previously married. Furthermore, the following condition is also required: Before they met, the *kallah* was a *bsula* and/or the *choson* had the same status (see S.B.C. 14:13 in the name of *Harav Elyashiv*, *zt"l*). See there for a full discussion of the opinions regarding this issue. When such *shaalos* arise, consult a *rav*.

19. These are commonly known as the days of "Sheva Brochos".

20. If this is not possible at any time during the week following the *chasunah*, a *rav* should be consulted.

21. If it is a second marriage (for an expanded definition of this, see footnote 18) for both the *choson* and *kallah*, the *y'mai hamishte* are only for three days, and *Sheva Brochos* is only recited following the *seudah* at the *chasuna* if the meal began on the same Hebrew day as the *chasuna* (*Chochmas Adam* 129:4).

22. Day #1 is determined at the moment the *Brocha Acharita* ends under the *chupah*. If it is *bain hashemashos*, the day before sunset is Day #1 (see S.B.C. 9:1-2).

23. *Sheva Brochos* may not be recited in the middle of the *seudah* without *Birchas Hamazon*. If a *Sheva Brochos* was scheduled for Day #7 and sunset is early, how can *Sheva Brochos* be recited in a *halachically* permissible manner? For example, assume the *seudah* begins at 6:45 p.m. on Day #7 and sunset is at 8:00 p.m. One option is as follows: Everyone should wash, and the main course should be served as soon as possible. At 7:45 p.m., *Birchas Hamazon* is recited and the *Sheva Brochos* are completed before sunset. Following *Birchas Hamazon*, speeches (or some other break) takes place followed by dessert (if it is a weeknight, and not after *shkia* going into *Motzai Shabbos*). It is not permitted to serve more food immediately after *Birchas Hamazon*, as this would cause a *brocha she'ayna tzeecha*. It should be noted, to make the above scenario a bit easier the *choson*, *kallah*, plus six additional adult males can recite *Birchas Hamazon* after the main course, followed by *Sheva Brochos* before sunset. Everyone else present would respond to the *mezamen*, but would recite *Birchas Hamazon* after dessert.

24. See *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchaso* 591:7. This is unlike a regular *mezuman*, after *shkia* on *Shabbos*, when the general *minhag* nowadays is not to drink from the wine but rather save the *kos* for the recitation of *Havdalah*.

25. This means that if the *choson* is in *shul* for *Shacharis* or *Mincha* within the first 168 hours after the end of the *chupah*, the entire *tzibur* does not recite *Tachanun* at the *minyan* he attends.

26. *Mishna Brura* 131:26

27. The *kosos* upon which *Birchas Hamazon* and *Sheva Brochos* are recited should be fit for *Kiddush* (i.e., hold a *reviis*, etc.).

28. We do not recite both sets of *brochos* on one *kos* because of the rule "ayn osen mitzvot chavilos chavilos" - we do not cheapen the *mitzvah* by "bundling together" more than one *mitzvah* onto one *kos*.

29. The third *kos* is not *halachically* necessary - just advisable to make it easier to mix the wine of the two *kosos*.

30. *Taz* E.H. 62:7. It is the prevalent *minhag* for the *mezamen* to add this *piyut* after "Yehi shem... v'adolom".

31. See *L'kutay Maharich* vol. 3 pg 135b-"Vheenay yaish" - 1st opinion.

32. *Sefer Yesodai Yeshurun* vol. 5, pg. 457, as it says in *Eicha* 5:17, "Al zeh haya daveh lebanu."





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Kosher Wine COMES OF AGE

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Modern winemaking is a fascinating mix of art and science. Kosher winemaking does not only require all-kosher ingredients and equipment, as well as a *Shomer Shabbos* staff, but it also demands close attention to the following common issues unique to the winemaking process.

The Winemaking Process

The winemaking process is quite complex and weaves together ancient tradition and modern technology. It's important to understand that the process is really broken down into three or four stages of supervision: 1. Crush, 2. Fermentation, 3. Aging, 4. Bottling.

1. Crush

From the time the grapes are crushed (*hamshacha*),⁵ the wine may only be handled by *Shomrei Shabbos* individuals. This requires a *kashrus* team that is large enough to accomplish all of the tasks involving direct contact with the product in any way until the wine is sealed properly, according to *halacha*. In certain cases, the requirement for *Shomrei Shabbos* personnel can even include truck or forklift drivers. *Mevushal* wine requires a full team of *Shomrei Shabbos* staff only until the wine is pasteurized in a manner that meets the *mevushal* requirement. Any time the wine is unsealed, full-time supervision is necessary; however, contact with *Mevushal* wine may be performed by non-*Shomer Shabbos* individuals.

2. Fermentation

The 'must' or juice is fermented with the addition of yeast and other processing aids for a certain period of time and under varying conditions, depending upon the type of grapes and style of wine that is being produced. Under kosher supervision, the wine must be either under the constant scrutiny of a *Shomer Shabbos* individual or double sealed properly, according to *halacha*.

3. Aging

Certain wines are aged in barrels or tanks for different periods of time, during which the wine is sealed properly according to *halacha*. However, there is usually a need for the seals to be opened either for the winemakers to taste the wine and determine the status of the wine or, in the case of barrel aged wines, in order to top off the barrels as the wine evaporates through the porous wood. When opening and resealing the wine, supervision is required; and, in the case of non-*mevushal* wine, even the drawing of the wine from the tank or barrel is exclusively done by *Shomrei Shabbos* personnel.

4. Bottling

Bottling is carried out under supervision. The kosher seals for the bottling are managed by the *mashgichim* and are designed to provide a double seal, as required by *halacha*. When non-*mevushal* wine is bottled, a larger *Shomer Shabbos* staff is required to ensure that the wine remains kosher by mitigating the need for ordinary plant staff.

The Ingredients

Although grapes are always kosher, and the other ingredients in wine are seemingly not kosher-sensitive, there are actually a number of issues associated with the ingredients used in kosher wineries.

Since kosher wine is virtually always Kosher for *Pesach* (*KFP*), the following items need to be carefully addressed:

- Yeast must not only be kosher, but it must be *KFP* with no grain-based media used in its growth;
- Any nutrients and processing aids added or used need to be *KFP*;
- Barrels must be either new or confirmed kosher and *KFP* (many barrels are made with a flour paste which is kosher but also *chometz!*);
- Corks or caps must be *KFP*, as well.

The Winery

There are really two main categories of kosher wine production facilities:

- Kosher wines made in all-kosher facilities; and
- Kosher wines made in facilities that also produce non-kosher wine

All-Kosher Wineries

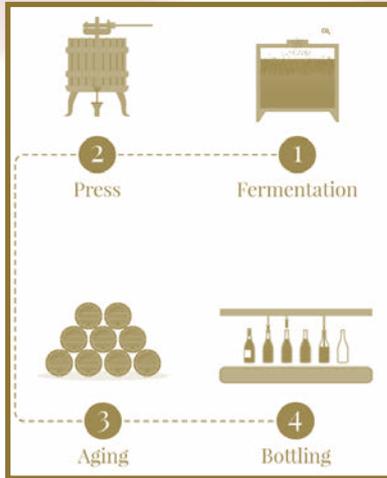
All-kosher wineries avoid the challenge of having to *kasher* non-kosher equipment. They have the advantage of dedicated on-site *mashgichim*/staff members who are well trained and expert in the processes needed to achieve the results the winery expects. Generally, having an all-kosher winery also dramatically lowers the number of *mashgichim* required for oversight, sealing and production. Furthermore, there is no fear of cross-contamination or mistakes with non-kosher product or ingredients.

Non-Kosher Facilities

At the outset of the kosher wine renaissance, kosher wine merchants leaned heavily upon the expertise and resources of non-kosher wineries. With centuries of traditions and a wealth of scientific knowledge, non-kosher wineries allowed kosher wine to spring forward in a short time to a level long believed to be impossible to achieve. Making a non-kosher winery partially kosher is achievable, but certainly a challenge.

- Kosherization issues

Large tanks with no internal heating mechanism are a challenge and an expense to kosherize. They can be *kashered* either through *milui v'irui*,⁶ filling with fresh water for 24 hours and emptying for three days in a row or through *irui kli rishon*,⁷ pouring boiling water on the surfaces. It can be expensive and technically challenging to kosherize large tanks and facilities and requires experienced, well trained *hashgacha* staff. *Kashrus* agencies and companies are often required to dedicate kosher tanks to avoid the need for *kashering* every year.



5. שו"ע י"ד קכ"ג סעי' י"ד.

6. שו"ע י"ד ס'קל"ה ואו"ח ס' תנ"א סעי' ס' ועוד.

7. ע' בדברי השו"ע י"ד קל"ה ס'ק ל"ג.

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words “*She’hasimcha Bimono*”³³ as found in the *bentcher* are also added by the *mezamen* and those who respond.³⁴

When *Birchas Hamazon* is over, the second *kos* is filled³⁵ and brought³⁶ to six different men (over *Bar Mitzvah*) each of whom holds the *kos* and recites a different *brocha*.³⁷ The first *brocha* is “*Shehakol Barah Lichvodo*”. The last *brocha* of these six is “*Asher Barah*”. One should not speak during or between *Sheva Brochos*; this ideally applies to everyone present.³⁸ *L’chatchila*, the person reciting *Sheva Brochos* should have eaten. *B’dieved*, even one who did not partake of the meal may recite a *brocha*. The custom is that the *choson* does not recite the *Sheva Brochos*.³⁹

After the *brocha* of “*Asher Barah*” is completed, the *mezamen* then recites “*Borei Pri Hagafen*” on the first *kos* and has in mind to be *motzi* the *choson* and *kallah*, in addition to anyone else who wants to drink.⁴⁰ The wine in the cups is then mixed⁴¹ using the third *kos*. The *mezamen* should ideally drink a *rov revii*s (2 fl. oz.). The *minhag* is that the *choson* and *kallah* also drink at least a little wine.

33. The *mezamen* adds these words (even on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*) twice – first, when he says “*Birshus ... Nevereich Elokeinu, Shehasimcha...*”, and second when the responders finish and he says “*Boruch Elokeinu, She’hasimcha...*” Those in attendance add, “*Shehasimcha Bimono*” once (after *Boruch Elokeinu*).

34. An additional person present who did not eat or drink should recite, “*Boruch Elokeinu u’movrach shmo tamid l’olam va’ed, shehasimcha bimono*” (Mishna Brura 198:6). Alternatively, some say that someone who did not eat should add the words, “*She’hasimcha bimono*” immediately after “*Boruch Elokeinu*” and then say “*umovrach shmo...*” (Maamer Mordechai O.C. 198:2).

35. Alternatively, the second *kos* can be filled before *Birchas Hamazon*.

36. Another option is that they come to the table where the second *kos* has been placed and recite the *Sheva Brochos* there.

37. Alternatively, one person recites all six *brochos* on the second *kos*.

38. S.B.C. 6:5. However, one may speak if it relates to the *Sheva Brochos* procedures (e.g., “Give *Ploni* the next *brocha*”).

39. *Minchas Yitzchak* 3114

40. The *choson* and *kallah*, and anyone else who wants to drink, should have in mind to be *yotzei* with the *mezamen*, and the *mezamen* should have “everyone” present in mind when reciting *Borei Pri Hagafen*.

41. One method of mixing is as follows: Pour some of *Kos* #1 into an empty *Kos* #3. Then pour some of *Kos* #2 into *Kos* #3. Now pour some of *Kos* #3 back into *Kos* #1 and then more of *Kos* #3 into *Kos* #2. Now all three cups have wine from both *kosos*. The *Baal Haseudah* should give *Kos* #1 to the *mezamen* to drink, *Kos* #2 to the *choson*, and *Kos* #3 directly to the *kallah*.

42. Those who wish to sing “*Asher Barah*” and “*Kol Sasson*” should note the following: When singing during the recitation of the *brochos*, the one who recites the *brocha* should recite “*Asher Barah...*” and “*Kol Sasson...*” after the participants have completed their singing (e.g., he says “...*Elokeinu melech haolam...*” and they sing “*Asher Barah...v’shalom v’revus*”, then he says “*Asher Barah...*”). This ensures that everyone hears the recitation of the *brocha*. If the assembled wish to sing “*Asher Barah*” after the last *brocha*, they should ideally wait to sing until after the *mezamen*, *choson* and *kallah* begin to drink. This will avoid an inadvertent *hefsek* between the *brocha* and drinking. See also S.B.C. *Siman* 353, Os 3.

It is important to note that the order of *brochos* is different under the *chupah*. Under the *chupah*, “*Borei Pri Hagafen*” is recited first, followed by “*Shehakol Barah Lichvodo*”. The last *brocha* (i.e., “*bracha achrita*”) is “*Asher Barah*”. At the *seudah* of the wedding, and during the *shivas y’mei hamishte*, “*Shehakol Barah*” is recited first, “*Asher Barah*”⁴² is the sixth *brocha* recited, and “*Borei Pri Hagafen*” is recited last. When using “*Sheva Brochos* cards”, it is advisable to ensure the cards are distributed in the correct order, as indicated above.

In the *z’chus* of our participation in being *m’sameach* each new *choson* and *kallah*, may they be *zocheh* to build a *binyan aday ad* and *bayis ne’eman b’Yisroel*. May we also merit *yasis alayich Elokeyich kimsos choson al kallah* with the coming of *Moshiach* speedily in our days.

Kosher Wine COMES OF AGE

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- Proper sealing, supervision and segregation of the wine

Kosher wine must be constantly sealed or supervised properly, guarding against *kashrus* or *Pesach* issues. *Chosam B’Toch Chosam* seals are not sufficient in some cases when the wine is in a non-Jew’s possession.⁸ Often, *kashrus* agencies either rent the areas where the wine is stored or ensure that there is a Jewish ownership share in the wine to avoid this problem.

Israeli Wineries

With the advent of wine from *Eretz Yisroel*, there are certain *Mitzvos Hateluyos B’aaretz* that must be addressed.

- *Orla* – unlike *chutz l’Aretz*, *sofek orla* is a major issue in *Eretz Yisroel*, where it is not permitted. When a vine dies, often a *hishtalmut*⁹ is used, the planting of a new vine in the middle of a row of an established vineyard. This creates a challenge because during the first three years, this vine may not be harvested. The *Rabbanut Harashit*

and many *hechsherim* oversee many vineyards and often use specially trained religious agronomists to identify and prune these vines to ensure they are not harvested. This is a very difficult and tedious process with many challenges regarding oversight and certification, especially in large vineyard operations. Some religious growers have a very commendable policy not to allow *hishtalmuyot* in order to avoid this problem.

- *Terumos U’Maaseros* – must be separated correctly at the appropriate time.
- *Shvi’is* – While wine with *Kedushas Shevi’is* is generally not exported *chutz l’Aretz*, within *Eretz Yisroel* the vineyards and wineries are obligated to address *shemitta k’halacha*. For some, this means not producing any wine at all; others will either make wine under the *Otzar Beis Din*¹⁰ or rely on the *Heter Mechira*.¹¹ STAR-K and other international certifications do not certify or allow any of these wines from the *Shemitta* crop.¹²

8. ע' תהות רע' א' ש' ע' י' ד' ס' כ' פ' נ' ג' ה' ד' א' ע' ו' ש' ה' ר' צ' ב' י' ד' ס' ק' א'.

9. A new vine is planted to “fill in” the place of the old, dead vine.

10. ע' מנחת ירושלים פרק ס' חזו"א שבביעית ס' ע' א' אות ז'.

11. ע' ספר השמיטה להגאון ר' יחיאל מיכל טוקובינסקי זצ"ל.

12. Nevo Chazan, who operates an eponymous STAR-K certified boutique winery in Moshav Matta, is a wonderful example of a religious farmer and vintner. His vertically integrated winery grows grapes, produces wine and sells it directly to consumers. He is a third-generation *Shomer Shemitta*, who opens his vineyards to the public for harvest during *Shemitta*, and does not harvest any of his *Shemitta* grapes for production. He also eschews the practice of *hishtalmuyot*, due to the serious challenges of observing *Orla* properly. Nevo is an example of a *Mehadrin* winery striving to make the best wine at the highest possible level of *kashrus*.

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LIFE IS NOT A DRESS REHEARSAL: *Making your Simcha a Star Performance*

RABBI TZVI ROSEN
EDITOR, KASHRUS KURRENTS



The joy, the planning, the anticipation, the expense — there is a lot that goes into a *Yiddishe simcha*. Be it a *chasuna*, *Bar Mitzvah*, or *bris* — every significant life cycle event is extra special, and the *baalei simcha* want to ensure that their guests have a good time. Central to that goal is a delicious *seudas mitzvah*. Endless hours of planning are spent making sure everything is perfect, from the decor to the menu. Is the same effort expended regarding the *kashrus* level of the event? If the *simcha* is being catered, does the caterer have reliable *kosher* certification? As catering costs have risen, consumers have opted to cater their own *simchas*. This article will attempt to address some key issues that one should consider when self-catering an event.

The Kiddush

Pre-planning your *Kiddush* is the best strategy to guarantee that the *simcha* will encounter a minimum amount of glitches. If the *Kiddush* is being held in a *shul*, inquire about their guidelines. Some *shuls* have their own *Kiddush* committee; others will allow you to prepare the *Kiddush* yourself. Even if you cater it yourself, there are many details that are subject to review. For instance, which certifications does the *shul* permit? Does the *shul* require that all baked goods be *Pas Yisroel* and/or *Yoshon*? Can you purchase boxed bakery goods from the supermarket, or must the baked goods come from a *Shomer Shabbos* bakery? Does the *shul* accept baked goods from out-of-town bakeries? Furthermore, cakes are often decorated with pictures or lettering that one may not cut on *Shabbos*. If rolls are served, is there a washing station? If one purchases rolls marked “*Mezonos*”, does it meet the criteria of the *rav* or *Rav Hamachshir*? And even if it does meet the criteria, does one still have to wash for the *seudah*?¹ If the *Kiddush* is dairy, do the dairy products have to be *Cholov Yisroel* or will *Cholov Stam* products fit the bill?

If the *Kiddush* bakery products have to be *Yoshon*, the *baal simcha* should realize that *Yoshon* does not just include breads, cakes and cookies. Products such as jarred *gefilte* fish, licorice, pretzels, noodle *kugels* and even potato *kugels* that may have flour in their ingredients must also be *Yoshon*.

What is the *shul*'s policy regarding prepared food that is brought in to the *shul* from a take-out store? Does the store need to be under *hashgacha* and, if so, which *hashgachos* would be acceptable? Another issue to keep in mind is how the food is packaged when it comes into the *shul*. Meat and fish items require two *simanim* (seals) when they leave the store; cheese, dairy, and bakery goods require only one *siman*. Is someone responsible for checking that the items coming into the *shul* have a reliable *kosher hechsher* and are properly sealed?

Additionally, one should ask about the *shul*'s policy regarding home baked items; sometimes, there are outstanding home bakers who bake beautiful *simcha* cakes. Does the *shul*'s policy require *kosher* supervision for these cakes? If neighbors are bringing home baked products, some of the guests may expect a few of these goodies to be *Yoshon*. **It would be a good idea to place small signs indicating which items are *Yoshon*.**

If potato chips and pretzels are being purchased, do they have to be *Bishul Yisroel* and/or *Pas Yisroel*? It goes without saying that someone needs to be responsible for opening all unopened cans, bags, boxes and bottles before *Shabbos*.

Candies are often brought into the *shul* by the *baal simcha*. If the *Kiddush* is *fleishig*, the candies will need to be *pareve*; but, if the *Kiddush* is *milchig*, should the candies be *Cholov Yisroel*?

What is the *shul*'s policy concerning wines and liquor? Does all wine need to be *Mevushal*? Do all the liqueurs have reliable *kosher* supervision?

SOME LIKE IT HOT: HOT CHOLENT AND POTATO KUGEL

Everyone loves hot potato *kugel* and *cholent*. Since the *baal simcha* is preoccupied with the event and cannot be in the kitchen, he or she should designate a person to be responsible for igniting all cooking and heating equipment. Since no cooking can take place on *Shabbos* itself, all food must be fully cooked prior to *Shabbos*.² Many *halachos* were instituted to prevent transgressing *Torah* prohibitions, including two major ordinances to prevent cooking on *Shabbos*. “*Shehiya*” is leaving uncooked food on a cooking surface before *Shabbos*, in a place where it is possible for the fire to be adjusted in order to hasten or improve the cooking. To prevent this, *halacha* states that either the food should be edible before *Shabbos* or that the fire and controls be covered with a *blech* in order to avoid any potential issues with adjusting the fire. All food should be “fully” cooked before *Shabbos*.³ In addition, the stovetop should be covered with a *blech* and the knobs should also be covered over.

The second edict enacted to ensure that there is no cooking on *Shabbos* entails returning cold food to the stove or oven. This prohibition is called “*Chazara*”.⁴ There are strict guidelines that must be followed when returning cooked items to the oven. These laws apply even if the stovetop is covered with a *blech* or the food that one wants to put onto the *blech* is fully cooked and still hot. It is very important to review the laws of *Chazara* with your *morah d’asra* or *rav* to see what he does or does not permit to avoid any problems of *bishul* or *chazara* on *Shabbos*.

As one can clearly see, it is more than the color coordination and table decoration that contributes to a successful *Kiddush*.

The Shalom Zachor

Mazel Tov! It’s a boy, and he was born on Friday morning. Everyone is rushing and hurrying to get the *shalom zachor* ready. Quick! Get the beer and the *arbes* (chickpeas). Wow! That cherry wheat flavored beer sure looks good! So does that can of chickpeas. Hold on a second. Did you realize that flavored beers need reliable *kosher* certification? If your guests use only *Yoshon* products, were you aware that beer (which is produced from malted barley) may be *Chodosh* after the end of December? With the exception of water and plain seltzer, all beverages require reliable *kosher* certification. Do not make the mistake of assuming that a flavored alcoholic beverage is just a little lemon juice mixed in the beer; those flavors can also come

1. Orach Chaim (O.C.) 168:6, Mishnah Brura (M.B.) *ibid*
2. O.C. 318:25:1
3. O.C. 253:2, M.B. *ibid*
4. O.C. 253:5, M.B. *ibid*

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LIFE IS NOT A DRESS REHEARSAL: *Making your Simcha a Star Performance*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

from *Eretz Yisroel*. Glycerin is often used as a blending agent in these flavored beverages. Regular beer and ales are generally acceptable; those coming from the Far East, however, should be avoided.

As for the chickpeas, these are one of the leading items likely to be generated in a canning facility that also produces canned meat products. Therefore, it is very important to purchase canned chickpeas with a reliable kosher certification. *Heimische hechsharim* typically state “*Bishul Yisroel*” on the label.

The Sheva Brochos

Sheva Brachos are festive events in the Jewish life cycle, and *Shabbos Sheva Brachos* can be a grand undertaking. As the cost of having a caterer has become excessive for some *baalei simcha*, they have opted to cater the event themselves and buy prepared foods from reliably certified food vendors. In the trade, when food is purchased from the caterer or from the take-out store, it is referred to as a food service event as opposed to a fully catered *simcha*. It is critical that the *baal simcha* understands what his responsibilities are for this particular *Shabbos* event.

When the caterer delivers the food items, or when the food items are picked up from the store or commissary, it is imperative that the food be properly sealed—especially meat and fish. Once the seals are broken, the *hashgacha's* responsibility ends. It is the *baal simcha's* responsibility to check all food items as they enter his/her home or social hall to determine if the products have proper kosher identification.

The *baal simcha* must also assure that the *kashrus* status of the food continues. He is responsible for ensuring that an observant Jew watches the meat, chicken and fish items to avoid problems of “*bosor shenislaim min hoayin*”. This problem often arises when non-Jewish help is hired to prepare the meal and are not supervised in the social hall where the event is being prepared.

If the meal is being cooked by non-Jewish or non-observant support staff, all fires must be turned on by an observant Jew to avoid problems of *bishul akum*. It is very important to realize that fires are often turned on and off during the course of the

meal preparation. For the *halachos* of hot food and *cholent* preparation on *Shabbos*, please refer back to the “Some Like It Hot” segment in the *Kiddush* section.

It is important to use water urns that do not introduce fresh water, and to have all water urns turned on and tea essence made before *Shabbos* and kept warm on the *blech*.⁵ If sugar is being served in packets, all packets should be opened before *Shabbos*. All sealed food containers should also be opened before *Shabbos*.

One should also be cautious about salads and vegetables which have to be checked before *Shabbos* to make sure they are insect-free. Often salads, platters and trifles are made on *Shabbos* and involve cutting and separating peels, pits and seeds from the fruits or vegetables. Separating these items incorrectly may cause one to violate the prohibition of “*Borer*”, separating the bad from the good. These laws can become quite complicated in regards to food preparation. Therefore, it is advisable to check with one's *rav* to review these *halachos*.

All bakery items should be checked for *Pas Yisroel* and *Yoshon*. Wine and liqueur have to be checked for proper *hechsharim* and, if necessary, the wine or grape juice should be *Mevushal*.

The *baal simcha* is responsible for his/her chinaware, flatware, utensils, heating equipment and display pieces. Any questions regarding the previous use of these utensils should be addressed prior to their use.

Last but not least, the guests should be clearly aware that a *simcha* being held in a hall or a *shul* may not be under any official kosher certification.

As you can see, a little planning can go a long way to ensure that your *simcha* will be *freilach* and *geshmack* with minimum aggravation. Once you have catered your own *simcha*, you will have a different appreciation for the words *Mazal Tov*—you've made it through the self-catering experience! *Yasher Koach!*

⁵ *Kashrus Kurrents*, “*Kashrus of Tea*”, footnotes regarding the use of tea essence on *Shabbos*, by Rabbi Boruch Beyer, Summer 2013.

Kosher Wine COMES OF AGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

“Garage” or Boutique Wineries

There is a new and growing trend of kosher micro-wineries in Israel that are founded in people's garages. These wineries may present the following *kashrus* advantages because of their small size, provided the owner is *Shomer Shabbos*.

- These wineries are usually *Shomer Shabbos* and family owned/operated, so there is never a lack of *Shomer Shabbos* supervision.
- They are all-kosher and rely on no kosherization.
- The productions are small and easily controlled.

- The small amount of work is done easily only by the religious owners, with no pressure to find outside help or expertise.

In former times, whenever wine was required by *halacha* (i.e., *Arba Kosos* and Friday night), *Poskim* searched for the minimum *shiur* allowed. This was often because of the tremendous expense and scarcity of good drinkable wine. Today, as we can see from emerging quality wine productions, we can safely say

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Brandeis AEPi and J.E.W (Jewish Experience Week) at STAR-K for Kashrus Talk and Breakfast



Pictured: Rabbi Zvi Goldberg, STAR-K Kashrus Administrator (center); Rabbi Mendy Gould, Director of Meor Brandeis (right of center); Rabbi Tzvi Schwartz, Director of Jewish Experience (far right).

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This publication is dedicated to the memory of **M. Leo Storch**, of blessed memory, through a grant from Mrs. M. Leo Storch & Family.

Subscriptions

\$10(USD) annually for 4 issues -US & Canada
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