Preparing for Chodosh

RABBI MOSHE HEINEMANN
RABBINIC ADMINISTRATOR

The same Torah which does not permit us to eat the meat of an animal that does not have split hooves or chew its cud, also does not permit us to eat from new grain harvest until the barley sacrifice was brought in the on the second day of Pesach. The prohibited grain is called Chodosh.

What constitutes chodosh grain? Grain that was planted close to, during, or after Pesach, thereby taking root after the time of the Omer sacrifice, is not permitted to be eaten until the following Pesach. This grain is called Chodosh, literally, new grain. One observes chodosh by not eating food products containing chodosh grain.

Grain that has taken root before Pesach, even if it is harvested after Pesach, is permitted to be eaten immediately, without restriction. This grain is called Yoshon, literally, old grain. When a yoshon designation appears on a label, it means that yoshon grain is not permitted until the following Pesach.

I. Products

Some mitzvos, such as the command to mix dough in the possession of a Jew, are dependent on land. Those who live in the land of Israel have many opportunities to fulfill these mitzvos. In those areas, the mitzvah of eating chadash is one of the only agricultural mitzvos that we are obligated to perform.

It is well known that this is one of the mitzvos performed preferentially by women. Furthermore, one honors the Shabbos by baking and eating leavened bread on Erev Shabbos.

The following are halachic guidelines, based on the psak of Rabbi Moshe Heinemann.

I. Products

Products kneaded from wheat, spelt, barley, oats, and rye are obligated in this mitzvah. Baked goods produced from other grains are exempt from this mitzvah. One is obligated in this mitzvah only when the dough was mixed/kneaded while in the possession of a Jew. If the dough was kneaded in the possession of a gentile, and the Jew then acquires the product, there is no obligation for this mitzvah.

For example, milah is not taken from bread or cookies manufactured by a non-Jewish company, even when a Jewish customer buys them. The same is true when one purchases frozen dough kneaded before Pesach. However, if one purchases dough that was mixed/kneaded while it was owned by a Jew who was not a person who prepares food, one must perform the mitzvah as soon as possible.

II. Measurements

The amount of flour one must knead to be obligated in this mitzvah is an emerging mitzvah. This is equivalent to 43 1⁄2 tbsp (eggs). The exact volume of a tsp is questionable due to various factors, including the possible “downsizing” of the eggs used today in comparison with those used in Talmudic times. Thalacha, one should be mixed/kneaded when kneading 2 1⁄2 lbs. of flour, which on average is equivalent to 8 cups of flour. However, a bracha is not recited for this amount. If one kneads a smaller amount of flour, one is not obligated in this mitzvah.

There are two customs as to the amount that must be kneaded to require a bracha. Some individuals recite a bracha when kneading 3.675 lbs. or more of flour (on average, 12 1⁄2 cups). Many only recite a bracha when kneading 4.95 lbs. of flour (i.e. almost the entire contents of a 5 lb. bag of flour – on average, 16 1⁄2 cups of flour). Individuals should follow their family custom.

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**Consumer Products**

(only when bearing Star-K symbol)

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<tr>
<th>Company</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Electrolux Home Products</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRIGIDAIRE, KENMORE SABBATH MODE OVENS</td>
<td>(See <a href="http://www.star-k.org">www.star-k.org</a> for guidelines and specific model numbers.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent Marketing Alliance</td>
<td>Houston, TX</td>
<td>SAN PABLO BEANS</td>
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<td>NuCycle Therapy</td>
<td>Hillside, NJ</td>
<td>NUTS &amp; SEEDS</td>
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**Industrial/Institutional Products**

(see letter of certification)

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</tr>
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<td>Dongguan Super Success Pharm. Co.</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Bradenton, FL</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Houghton Chemical Corporation</td>
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<td>AMINO ACIDS, VITAMIN COMPONENTS</td>
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<td>Zhangzhou Longhai Lubao Food Co.</td>
<td>Fujian, China</td>
<td>CANDIED VEGETABLES</td>
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<tr>
<td>B’Tevone</td>
<td>50 Jefferson St, Monticello, NY</td>
<td>DAIRY RESTAURANT/TAKE OUT</td>
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**New Under Star-K Kosher Certification**

**New Under Star-D**

The Star-D is a kashrus symbol of the National Council of Young Israel (NCYI). The Star-K, in its relationship with the NCYI, administers the kashrus of the Star-D. All Star-D products are dairy - cholov stam (non-cholov Yisroel).

**Products**

(only when bearing Star-D symbol)

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<th>Company</th>
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<tr>
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<td>GMG BAKERY, MADISON AVENUE’S BETTER BAKER CAKE &amp; PASTRY PRODUCTS, COOKIES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katy Sweet Confectioners</td>
<td>La Grange, TX</td>
<td>KATY SWEET CANDY &amp; CONFECTIONERY ITEMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Christie Cookie Company</td>
<td>Nashville, TN</td>
<td>THE CHRISTIE COOKIE, ORIGINAL FROZEN COOKIE DOUGH, OLD FASHIONED FROZEN COOKIE DOUGH CAKE &amp; PASTRY PRODUCTS, FROZEN COOKIE DOUGH, COOKIES</td>
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**Establishments**

(see letter of certification)

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<tr>
<td>KRISPY KREME #8846</td>
<td>195 Broadway, Hicksville, NY</td>
<td>DOUGHNUT SHOP</td>
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**New Under Star-D**

The Star-D is a kashrus symbol of the National Council of Young Israel (NCYI). The Star-K, in its relationship with the NCYI, administers the kashrus of the Star-D. All Star-D products are dairy - cholov stam (non-cholov Yisroel).
Appliance manufacturers, with the aid of modern technology, have designed kitchen appliances to be safer, more efficient and incorporate various features to enhance operation. However, the incorporation of this technology may pose a challenge to their proper use on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

In 1997, a historic technological project was launched between a major appliance manufacturer and a kosher certification agency, Whirlpool Corporation (manufacturers of KitchenAid). The Star-K approached the Star-K to help them modify their ovens so they could be used on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Prior to that time many of their appliances did not conform to halachic guidelines for use on Shabbos or Yom Tov. After making adjustments, a successful mode was developed. Whirlpool called this “the Sabbath Mode” and was awarded a patent in 1998 for this concept.

Star-K certification on appliances falls into two categories. The first, Sabbath Mode, includes models that have unique software/hardware designed into them that specifically address our concerns. The second category, Sabbath Compliant, includes models that the manufacturer wanted us to assess for use by the observant Jew. The intention was to help the consumer avoid the unwanted surprise of not being able to use their expensive purchase on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Details of manufacturers in both these categories, listed by company along with the specific model numbers, are available by contacting the Star-K at 410-484-4110.

OVENS

Category One – Sabbath Mode

Note: The Sabbath mode does not allow us to use these appliances completely at will on Shabbos or Yom Tov. Rather, it enables us to use these appliances within the guidelines of halacha as delineated in the letters of certification available from the Star-K office. Ovens with the Sabbath mode will not shut off after twelve hours of continuous operation. In many cases this mode will prevent the oven light from going on/off as the door is opened/closed. In some models, however, the bulb must be unscrewed or the light left on for the entire period. No lights, digits, solenoids, fans, icons, tones, or displays will be activated/modified in the normal operation of the oven.

For Sabbath mode models, the set temperature can be raised or lowered on Yom Tov (but not on Shabbos) for cooking purposes at any time, because there is a built-in delay between the request for temperature change and its actual implementation.

Category Two – Sabbath Compliant

Ovens certified as Sabbath compliant have the same basic features as those with the Sabbath mode, except no delay is built into the set temperature change process. On some models, adjustment of the set temperature may still be possible on Yom Tov. These models do not have a digital temperature readout. They have an indicator light that cycles on/off as power is on/off to the heating elements. One can raise the temperature when the light is on and lower it when it is off. For other Sabbath compliant models which do not have a cycling indicator light, the set temperature chosen before Yom Tov cannot be adjusted on Yom Tov. For details about specific models, contact the Star-K at 410-484-4110.

Timed Bake

Many ovens have a timed bake feature that permits one to have the oven go off after a fixed period of time. However, after the time is up, many models chime indefinitely or have an icon or light that is cancelled when the door is first opened. The Star-K has a list of those models that have timed bake without these drawbacks when in Sabbath mode.

Warming Drawers

Warming drawers should be treated as standard ovens since they present the same issues. They are thermostatically controlled and their lowest temperature is often above 115°F. As is the case with a standard oven, all food must be placed in the warming drawer before the start of Shabbos.

Power Failures

For safety reasons, most ovens will not recover from a power failure in the ON condition. Some exceptions are included in the Star-K’s oven literature.

REFRIGERATORS

Not to be left out in the cold, refrigerators have also succumbed to the incorporation of modern technology. In addition, old issues such as when to open the refrigerator door on Shabbos, and what to do about heating elements that turn on to defrost the coils, remain to be solved. The Star-K has developed a set of requirements that use modern technology to alleviate these problems.

Refrigerators certified by the Star-K incorporate the technology that solves these issues. After entering the certified mode (called either Sabbath or Holiday mode), the consumer does not have to worry about lights, digits, icons, tones, alarms, solenoids or fans being activated/deactivated when opening or closing the door. A built-in delay prevents the compressor from turning on immediately after the door is opened. The defrost cycle operates solely on clock time without any feedback from consumer usage of the refrigerator. (Current technology is introducing control of the defrost cycle by counting the number and length of door openings which may present a halachic problem.) Finally the ice and coldwater systems will be turned off since they invariably use electrical solenoids and motors to operate. (After a power failure, units will return to the certified mode.)

This article is merely an overview of the application of modern technology to appliances and how it affects the Orthodox Jewish consumer. For certified models, and guidelines for their proper usage, please contact the Star-K at 410-484-4110.
Preparation for Chodosh

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grains are used in the preparation of this product.

The prohibition of chodosh only applies to the five major grain types, namely wheat, oats, barley, rye, and spelt. Although spelt is not commonly used in the United States, it can be blended in multigrain bread blends, or can be purchased as a health/non-allergy food product, such as spelt pasta. Chodosh does not apply to corn, soy, beans, peas, rice, millet, buckwheat, and other grains.

In the United States, there are various grades of wheat: Durum, Hard Red Spring, Hard Red Winter, Soft Red Winter, Hard White, and Soft White. Winter wheats are planted in the late fall or early winter and are harvested in the late spring or early summer. Since winter wheat is planted before Pesach and is harvested after Pesach, it is always yoshon. Spring wheat is planted in the spring and is harvested in the late summer or early fall. Since spring wheat is usually planted after Pesach, one must wait until the following Pesach before the spring wheat becomes yoshon. Since the spring wheat, which is chodosh, reaches the marketplace at summer’s end, chodosh restrictions begin at the end of the summer and last until the following Pesach. Once the second day of Pesach passes, the prohibited chodosh grains are halachically transformed into yoshon grains and are permitted to be eaten. From after Pesach until the end of the summer all chodosh related problems cease.

The nutritional and physical profiles of wheat grains are not identical. Therefore, wheat grains have different baking applications. Specifically, there are two grades of winter wheat: hard red and soft red. Hard red winter wheat is a high gluten, high protein variety, whose grain is tight and hard. It is used for bread, challah, bagels, and pizza dough. Hard white wheat and hard red winter wheat have similar production practices. Hard white wheat is used primarily for yeast, breads, and hard rolls. Soft red winter wheat is a softer grain that has a lower protein structure and is perfectly suited for matzoh, crackers, pie crusts, and non-yeast cakes. Spring wheat is a high gluten, high protein variety, similar to hard red winter wheat. The protein of spring wheat is even higher than that of hard red winter wheat, and is also used for bread dough. Soft white wheat is a soft wheat used for cakes, cookies, and crackers. Durum wheat has the hardest of all wheat kernels and contains the highest proportion of protein of any of the classes of wheat. Durum wheat is not suited for breads or pastries. This wheat is used for pasta products.

One may assume that products made from soft red winter wheat are always yoshon. One should assume other products, such as bread, bagel dough, and yeast cakes, are chodosh.

The all-purpose flour available in stores is often a mixture of winter and spring wheats. Rye grain usually is never a problem. (Note: This is not to be confused with rye bread which is made from a wheat and rye flour blend.) Barley and oats always present a yoshon problem. Pasta products are made from durum wheat and have been a constant chodosh concern.

It is not possible for a farmer to plant a winter crop and a spring crop on the same land, since the spring crop must be planted before the winter crop is harvested. Given a choice, a farmer will always plant a winter crop, as winter wheat is more disease resistant than the spring variety, and is usually less susceptible to adverse conditions, such as drought. In the United States, approximately 75-80% of the crop is of the winter variety. It may be presumed, because of the abundance of winter wheat, that any product which could be made from either winter or spring wheat was made with winter wheat. That product can therefore be considered yoshon. If one knows that a specific product was made from spring wheat, then the laws of chodosh apply.

Since we have not merited the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash yet, and we have no Torah today, one may not partake of the new harvest until the fourth day of Pesach. In the shul of the Rebbe Rashab, it was known that only a person meticulous in the fulfillment of this mitzvah was eligible to be called up to the Torah when the verses relating to chodosh were read. There is an opinion that chodosh restrictions apply only to grain grown in Eretz Yisroel. Another opinion asserts that chodosh applies only to the grain of a Yehudi. However, the majority of Poskim agree that chodosh still applies today to all grains grown in and outside of Eretz Yisroel, belonging to Jew or non-Jew alike. It should be noted that throughout Europe it was customary to rely on the lenient view because bread was the staple of the diet, and without it one’s health would have suffered greatly. The Rabbanim, therefore, considered this an emergency situation, and in emergency cases one relies on the opinion of a single individual. In the United States today, where yoshon products are available, a conscientious kosher consumer should strive to get the best. These are the words of the Rebbe Rashab, zt”l, to his talmidim, hayom hahu. It is important to stress, however, that one who does not keep chodosh is not considered in the wrong. Rather, adherence to the laws of chodosh is in the category of kedushah hashemah, similar to kosher vs. glut kosher.

This brief article was intended to familiarize the public with the mitzvah of chodosh. Individuals who are interested in accepting upon themselves this beautiful mitzvah should accept it, zehi v’al dodi, in order not to create possible problems where no yoshon products are available.

Star-K Kosher Certification

A non-profit agency representing the Kosher consumer in promoting Kashrus through Education, Research and Supervision.

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25 years of kashrus leadership
These measurements apply when baking bread or any other hamotzot product. When kneading dough for baking (e.g. cake and cookies), for boiling (e.g. noodles), or for frying, one is halachically required to use 2.6 lbs. (85% cups) of flour. A bracha is not recited even if more than 5 lbs. of flour are used.

III. The Procedure

After kneading, while standing, one should hold up the dough (without detaching it) and recite the bracha. As mentioned above, the bracha for this case is over and there is no additional benefit. One should then pull off the dough. At this point, some recite the words “ בישראל ויראשנו…” (some add the words הבש נשב וברחה). One should then simply pull off the dough and say “ והרוא אש.” If a liquidy batter (e.g. chocolate cake) is prepared, one must perform the hafrasha only after the product is baked.

The dough should then be burned as soon as possible until it is completely charred. One should not store the dough for future burning (e.g. freeze it for burning at a later date). When being mafrisht without a bracha, one should simply pull off the dough and say “ והרוא אש.” If a liquidy batter (e.g. chocolate cake) is prepared, one must perform the hafrasha only after the product is baked.

The dough may be burned in a regular oven or toaster oven if it is wrapped in foil. However, one may not burn the dough in an oven that is simultaneously baking bread or other products. After burning the dough, it should be wrapped in something waterproof and discarded.

IV. Errors

1. If one accidentally discarded the dough before burning it, nothing further is required, as the mafrish (which constitutes the main part of the mitzvah) has been performed. In this case, one may eat the bread as usual.

2. If one forgot to be mafrisht challah until after baking, one may be mafrisht challah on fully baked goods. A bracha is recited (if enough flour was originally used) and one pulls off a piece of bread from a roll or loaf of bread and burns it.

If one remembers on Shabbos that the dough was not separated, one may not be mafrisht until Shabbos is over. If the dough was kneaded in loshon ha’aretz, one may continue eating. A piece should be left over until after Shabbos, at which time one is mafrisht from the remaining piece. One may not simply take the leftover piece and burn it – a mafrish is necessary. This mafrish after Shabbos “works” on all the products that came from the original kneaded dough, even if the rest of the baked goods are elsewhere or one has eaten them. In Eretz Yisroel, one may not eat the product until one is mafrisht the flour (after Shabbos ends). If one entered the kitchen on Shabbos and was mafrisht, the dough was burned.

3. If the dough was inadvertently mixed back into the regular dough, a Rav should be consulted. If one is unable to burn the dough she was mafrisht, a Rav should be consulted.

V. Combination of Doughs

One of the most complex yet important aspects of the mafrish is that of the dough being “combined” into another dough. This issue, known as mafrish, can be divided into three categories: 1. Each Individual Dough is Less Than a Shiar - If two or more doughs individually do not have a shiar large enough to require a mafrish (as addressed earlier), under certain conditions halachah states that they are mafriset. For example, if one kneads three separate doughs, each using two pounds of flour (i.e. individually, there is no obligation to be mafriset on each small batch) they now collectively add up to six pounds. If one does not care that the doughs are mixed with each other, one is obligated in a mafrish if they meet any of the following conditions:

a. The doughs are in one vessel, and preferably touching. If either dough rises above the top of the vessel, the doughs should be covered to combine the entire contents.

b. All the doughs are wrapped together on the bottom and top (e.g. in one sheet of plastic).

c. One places the dough on the table and pushes them together allowing them to bond well enough so that when one is pulled from the other, a chunk is pulled off the attached dough.

The above also applies if someone baked several batches that add up to a shiar – a mafrish is required.

4. Where is a mafrish required?

Two or more doughs are obligated in a mafrish if the entire dough is a mafrish or if the contents.

5. How can the mafrish be performed?

There are six eggs in a pound, 24 cupcakes in a dozen, and three eggs in an egg carton – a tenth of an egg is 43 eggs.

6. How many eggs are in a pound?

An 8 oz. cup of flour generally weighs between 4.3 and 5.3 oz. There is no precise conversion between the weight and volume of flour. The temperature, methods of storage, type of flour, how one fills the measuring cup, and whether it is sifted, can all impact on this amount. For example, if it is hot and humid, the flour will expand, thereby decreasing the volume (but not the weight). Similarly, one cup of “scooped and tapped” flour will weigh more than one cup of “sprinkled and leveled” flour. One cup of bread flour weighs more than one cup of all-purpose flour.

7. How many cups are in a pound?

In this article, the following calculations are used (based on our testing and observations): The average weight of one cup of flour is 4.8 oz., which also means 1 lb. of flour will fill 3/4 cups.
The same applies to other products, including cookies, stored in a bag or plastic container.

Under any of these conditions, if the doughs combine to make the required "shir", one is mafrish from one dough. This action would take care of the "shir" for all the doughs. For example, if one kneaded two 3 lb. batches and placed the doughs in one container, allowing them to touch, one would recite a "bracha" only and be mafrish a "shir" from one of the batches (since there is now a total of 6 lbs.). If one kneaded one 1½ lb. batches (i.e. if each dough was left alone they would not require the "shir" here), and placed them in a container allowing them to touch, one is mafrish a "shir" from one dough without a "bracha".

2. One or More Doughs Have a "Shir" – If two doughs are kneaded separately and each dough individually has a "shir" that is obligated in the "shir" of these doughs are mafrish min - "in the same vicinity." This means as follows. If they are not in containers they are mafrish since they are in front of the individual being mafrish or the doughs are anywhere in the same room. If the doughs are in containers, they are mafrish min if the containers are open and next to each other. Under these conditions, one may be mafrish from one dough and it will apply to all the doughs that are mafrish min. For example, if one kneads two doughs, that use 5 lbs. of flour, and the doughs were on different tables in the same room, one may be mafrish on one dough and have in mind for this separation to work on the other dough.

The same halacha applies if one dough has a "shir" and the other doughs do not. For example, if one dough consists of 5 lbs. of flour and the other dough consists of 2 lbs., and they both are in front of the individual being mafrish or on tables in the same room, the 2 lb. dough is mafrish with the 5 lb. dough. One is only required to be mafrish a "shir" from the 5 lb. dough.

3. Forgetting to Take Off the Original Batch - As previously indicated, if one kneads a batch that has a "shir" that requires the "shir" to be taken off and one forgets to take it off until after it was baked, one may still be mafrish on the fully baked goods. It is not necessary to bring all the loaves together for the separation. For example, if one bakes six loaves of bread from one batch using a total of 5 lbs. of flour, and these six loaves are now stored in different freezers, one can simply perform the separation on one loaf, even if the other loaves are not present.

VI. Special Cases

1. Dividing – If one bakes using a mafrish

[16] If one was mafrish from the liquidy batter, there are different opinions whether one must be mafrish from the "shir" again. The Gemara says it should be performed again after it is baked (without a "bracha").

[17] Therefore, it is necessary to bring all the loaves together for the separation to work in this case.

[18] This would constitute deriving benefit from the "shir" (i.e. "feels" the oven) which is prohibited.


[20] One reason it may not be performed on Shabbos because it is in the same vicinity. One may not perform the "shir" on the "shir" on Yom Tov – on dough that was kneaded before Yom Tov. However, if one kneads and bakes on Yom Tov, one may perform the "shir" on Yom Tov – however, the dough may not be baked until after Yom Tov.

[21] As previously indicated, one must recite a "bracha" on the baked goods which requires a "bracha".

[22] As indicated above, the "mitzvah" in this case is not as strict because it is a "bracha" on a "bracha". Hence, in this case one may continue eating on Shabbos, whereas in a regular case one may not.

[23] If the "shir" is ½ or less in the regular dough, then it is batel and may be eaten. If it is more than one part in 101, a possible solution is to "batel" those loaves. Consult a Rav for this procedure.

[24] Similarly, the same halachos apply if one kneads dough from wheat flour, and the doughs were on different tables in the same room, one may be mafrish on one dough and have in mind for this separation to work on the other dough.

[25] This halacha applies to individuals and not to bakeries who produce for sale. Jewish owned bakeries are obligated in the "shir" of the baker, each time a batch is kneaded.

[26] To alleviate this problem, a small amount of water suffices. Alternatively, one can use wine, grape juice, olive oil, or milk. (Note: Milk may be used in cake and cookies, but not bread.)
How can you learn to deal with the challenges of supervising a first-class hotel’s kosher kitchen which is next to its non-kosher kitchen? Where does one find the opportunity to tour a flavor plant to better understand the kosher manufacturing process? Who will train you to find the less obvious thrips and aphids when checking a restaurant’s vegetables? What will give you the preparation to administer – or perhaps, pioneer - a communal kosher certification agency?

Star-K Kosher Certification recently provided the platform for these unique learning opportunities and more. In its new complimentary certificate program, Star-K’s Kashrus Training Program allowed Kollel yungerleit of Yeshivas Ner Yisrael to experience the field of kosher supervision first hand. Held July 12-16, at Star-K’s offices in Baltimore, Maryland, the five day intensive seminar was limited to 25 students who have studied Yorah Deah.

Ner Yisrael Kollel fellow Moshe Schuchman’s sentiments regarding the seminar only confirm the need for such a program. They reflect those of every participant in the group that spent the week training with the Star-K. He writes in his thank you letter to Dr. Pollak: “We reveled in the opportunity to view the workings of such a prestigious and significant kashrus organization through an open and accommodating window. We gained immensely by learning from the qualified rabbonim and competent staff who have led the Star-K to its position as a leader in the kashrus industry. … Even those who were previously acquainted with the kashrus field felt they greatly benefited from this exceptional program.”

The certificate program is a spin-off of the National Council of Young Israel’s Rabbinic Training Program’s seminar on kashrus, which took place last winter. There, Star-K Kashrus Administrator, Rabbi Zvi Goldberg stressed the need for additional training for future rabbonim who often find themselves at the helm of their community’s kashrus. In addition to having a basic knowledge about the practical halachos of kashrus, a certificate program would train the participants to be responsible for the supervision of everything from a neighborhood food establishment to being in charge of setting up a local Vaad Hakashrus.

This pilot program, run in cooperation with the Ner Yisrael Kollel, is the forerunner of subsequent in-depth seminars planned by the Star-K. In addition to accommodating Kollel members, future training seminars will be geared to pulpit rabbis, those who wish to pursue a professional career in kosher supervision, those presently in the field who wish to fine-tune their skills, and others who are involved in communal kashrus.

The seminar featured sessions led by Star-K Rabbinical Administrator, Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, and his team of rabbinical coordinators. Rav Heinemann, a world renowned expert in kashrus, reviewed the laws of bishul akum with the Kollel members. Dr. Avrom Pollak, President of the Star-K, discussed the administrative issues experienced by a certifying agency. In addition, the Star-K rabbinical coordinators shared their vast experience and expertise.

Director of Supervision, Rabbi Eliyahu Shuman discussed the ever-expanding flavor industry. Assistant Director of Supervision, Rabbi Mayer Kunicfeld dealt with foodservice challenges, treibering, supervision of bakeries and restaurants, and the nuts and bolts of kasherling. Rabbi Dovid Heber discussed the issues related to being a local mashgiach for a national agency and the kashrus issues related to Pesach. Rabbi Avrohom Mushell spoke about the importance of understanding food chemistry, as well as supervision of overseas plants.

In a special audio-visual presentation, Rabbi Tzvi Rosen expounded upon the dairy industry. Rabbi Boruch Beyer clarified the ins and outs of the beverage industry. The Star-K Hotline receives thousands of questions from consumers around the globe. Rabbi Zvi Goldberg addressed a cross-section sampling of the halachic issues posed. In his audio-visual presentation, Star-K engineering consultant, Mr. Jonah Ottensoser, familiarized the seminar participants with Star-K’s solutions to potential Shabbos and Yom Tov problems in appliance usage.

In addition to lectures, audio-visual presentations, and a hands-on practicum, several field trips rounded out the scholastic experience. The seminar included tours of a slaughterhouse, a treibering facility, a confectionery, a restaurant, a bakery, a flavor factory, and the kosher kitchen of a large first-class hotel. An “Ask the Rabbis” session led by Star-K staff members closed the seminar.

A top priority of the Star-K is to assist local kashrus associations throughout the U.S. in developing the appropriate standards, find qualified personnel, and establish its problem resolution procedures. The Star-K invites all community kashrus workers to consult with them. This new kosher supervisory training program promises to be an integral step in fulfilling the Star-K mission.

Rabbi Zvi Goldberg, coordinator of the training program, commented: “Teaching kashrus standards and techniques employed by Star-K kashrus professionals will assure communities of the availability of highly trained kashrus professionals. It will prepare them to handle the kashrus challenges they will face.”

“The varied and comprehensive schedule of lectures, presentations, and site visits maximized the time spent well beyond our expectations,” continued Kollel fellow Moshe Schuchman. “One participant quipped that the most disappointing moment of the week was when it was over. It was quite apparent that the Star-K does not limit meticulousness and thoroughness to its kashrus supervision but carries these ideals to all its endeavors.”

For further information about Star-K’s Kashrus Training Program, contact Rabbi Zvi Goldberg, (410) 484-4110.
Copepods in drinking water

Amongst the number of recent eye opening events that have impacted the Jewish community, a discovery was made last May regarding the halachic status of New York tap water. The New York kosher consumer was shaken by the fact that New York tap water, which had the reputation of being one of the most pure, clean, and natural water available, contains unwelcome visitors called copepods that are visible to the human eye. In spite of that fact that this was a New York discovery, the Star-K hotline in Baltimore was abuzz with inquiries of “Can we drink the water?!?” This is the Star-K response regarding copepods in drinking water based on discussions with Rav Moshe Heinemann Shlit’a, Star-K Rabbinical Administrator.

Q: What are copepods?

Copepods, also known as “insects of the sea,” are crustaceans that are found wherever water is found. The typical length of an adult copepod is 1-2 millimeters but some species can be as small as .2 millimeters. They are an important link in the ecosystem because copepods consume mosquito larvae that carry malaria. However, copepods are not kosher. If they can be seen by the naked eye, they may not be eaten and one should not drink water containing these uninvited guests.

Q: How large does an insect have to be in order to be considered visible?

Insects that are too small to be seen by the naked eye are not forbidden. If one requires a magnifying glass or a microscope to see an insect, then the insect is considered too small to be seen. However, if one sees white lint floating in the water and it is not recognizable as an insect, but through magnification one realizes that the white lint is indeed a copepod, the copepod is considered visible according to some opinions. Therefore, the water should not be consumed.

Q: What is a practical solution to resolve this problem?

The water should be filtered. The water filter can be connected to the faucet or to the home water source.

Q: Can this filter be used on Shabbos?

Water used for drinking should be filtered before Shabbos. Water used for washing dishes can be filtered on Shabbos.

Q: Does Maryland water have this problem?

No, Maryland water is filtered at the water treatment plant. New York water is not filtered. See diagram below.

Late breaking kashrus news and alerts are available via e-mail by sending a blank e-mail to alerts-subscribe@star-k.org.