

Kashrus Kurrents

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Star-K Launches Institute of Halachah

by: Margie Pensak



The Mishnah teaches us, “Appoint for yourself a Rav”, a Torah guide, from whom you can acquire clarity through wisdom. But, what happens when you do not have a personal Rav, or you live in a large Jewish community but your Rav is unavailable and time is of the essence for your halachic query?

STAR-K CERTIFICATION realizes that there is no substitute for a person’s own Rav. In an effort to offer a possible solution, it has launched its Institute of Halachah as a public service. Over the years, the agency’s Kashrus Hotline has answered generic halachic questions from kosher consumers the world over, including inquiries regarding the kosher status of foods and certified Sabbath mode appliances. The formation of a separate official division within STAR-K testifies to the need for addressing these issues.

The Institute of Halachah is directed by HaRav Mordechai Frankel, under the guidance of HaRav Moshe Heinemann, STAR-K’s Rabbinic Administrator. It is an invaluable resource for a diverse array of rabbis to discuss general halachic matters, as well as gain access to source materials for shiurim and answers to congregants’ questions.

HaRav Mordechai Frankel, a native of London, England, learned at Yeshivas Bais Yisroel in Israel before attending Ner Israel Rabbinical College, where he received s’micha from Rav Yaakov Kulefsky, zt”l. HaRav Frankel is the author of “Mayim Rabbim”, an analytical sefer on the meforshim and midrashim in Sefer Beraishis. He also teaches at Baltimore’s Bais Yaakov High School and Maalot Seminary, in addition to giving a Daf Yomi shiur.

“It will be a privilege to be a resource to the congregants and rabbonim of the many shuls across the country faced with questions spanning the full spectrum of halachah,” expressed Harav Frankel. “I am aware that it is a great responsibility to ensure that people are doing what Hashem wants, and following His will. The Institute of Halachah will help people get that clarity of what the Torah wants them to do.”

According to HaRav Heinemann, “HaRav Frankel is particularly suited for such a position, with his years of experience acting as a posek in the absence of both myself and Rav Yaakov Hopfer. I have confidence that HaRav Frankel will be able to do the perfect job to answer all the questions necessary, according to the Shulchan Aruch, in filling this tremendous need.”

Shailos from rabbonim and individuals may be called into the Institute of Halachah at 410-484-4110 x238, Monday-Thursday 2-5 p.m., Friday 11 a.m.-2 p.m., or e-mailed to: Halachah@star-k.org. (E-mails will be answered only during the hours noted.)

Glatt May Not Always Mean Kosher

BEWARE:

RABBI MOSHE HEINEMANN
STAR-K RABBINIC ADMINISTRATOR

It is written in our Torah, “Ubosor basodeh treifa lo socheilu” (Shmos 22:30), it is forbidden to eat treif meat. While the expression “treif” has become the universal connotation for food that is not kosher, in truth, the word treif specifically refers to an animal whose flesh was torn or ripped asunder. Technically speaking, if a kosher species of animal or fowl was attacked by a predator, the meat of the victim may be deemed treif, non-kosher. However, the meat of an animal improperly kosher slaughtered is not treifa, it is called a neveila. Technically, meat of a non-kosher animal species is the meat of a temeiah. Yet, the term “treif” has found its way through the portals of the slaughterhouse, as well as the aisles of the non-kosher meat section of the supermarkets. No matter what the name, all of these categories of meat are forbidden to be eaten.

The halachah requires that all animals and fowl used for kosher consumption be of a kosher species and slaughtered by a shochet, a specially trained ritual slaughterer. Once shechted, the freshly slaughtered animal or fowl must undergo a series of inspections, assuring the wholesomeness of the animal. If the animal was found to have suffered an internal defect, such as a rip, puncture, or broken bone, or if the animal appeared to be suffering from an illness or defect

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Insights from the Institute

SHAILOS FROM THE INSTITUTE OF HALACHAH



RABBI MORDECHAI FRANKEL
DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF HALACHAH

Kashrus Kurrents is proud to launch a new column, "Insights from the Institute". In this regular feature, *HaRav* Frankel will share with our readership intriguing *shailos* from his E-mail bag. The following is a sampling of the types of interesting questions that will be addressed in future columns.

Q: Can I make a birthday cake in the shape of the sun? It would be a round cake with cookie sticks around it to represent the sun's rays.

A: The *Torah*¹ states, "You shall not make with Me, gods of silver and gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves".² As *Rashi*³ tells us, the first phrase is understood to mean - you shall not make images of that which is with Me - i.e. images of heavenly bodies. For this reason, it is forbidden to make a model of the sun or moon or the stars, even if the image will not be used for idol worship.⁴ Similarly, a two dimensional drawing of these objects would be prohibited.⁵

The *Shach*,⁶ however, limits the prohibition to 'complete drawings'.⁷ Therefore, one could draw a partial picture of the sun, although it is debatable as to whether a picture of the crescent of the moon is considered a partial picture or a whole picture.⁸ Furthermore, a picture of the sun would be problematic only if it were to be a good representation of the sun.⁹ Therefore, *Rav* Moshe Feinstein writes concerning a child's drawing of the sun that it is an issue only if the child's drawing is a good likeness to the sun, which is most often not the case.¹⁰

It would seem that a cake baked in the shape of the sun would not be a better likeness than a child's drawing and would, therefore, be permitted. This was confirmed by *Rav* Heinemann, who told me that the Star-K clearly feels this way since it displays a picture of a star on every product it certifies.¹¹

Q: I am a dentist, and my father needs extensive dental work. If I do the work myself then it would save him a substantial amount of money, but the procedure will make him bleed. Am I allowed to do this?

A: In general, it is forbidden to hit or wound any Jew even if it does not cause that person to bleed,¹² and certainly it is forbidden to cause bleeding.¹³ However, the *Torah* permits medical work to be done even if the doctor will cause the patient to bleed.¹⁴ Besides this general prohibition, there is another special prohibition against a person hitting his or her parent,¹⁵ but this applies only when the child causes the parent to bleed.¹⁶ Even if the child is a doctor, when treating his parent

one should not cause bleeding by amputating a limb or even removing a splinter, unless there is no one else present to do it and the parent is in pain.¹⁷

The question now arises, 'What is the *halachah* in a situation where there are others present, but the parent specifically wants his or her child to perform the procedure (e.g. when this will save the parent money)?' The *Chidush*¹⁸ and others¹⁹ rule stringently and forbid this. However, the *Minchas Chinuch*²⁰ feels that if the parent were to give permission, then the child could even hit the parent and cause bleeding.

A similar question was posed to Rabbi Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky in 1944. A parent needed daily injections, and the child inquired as to whether he could perform this service himself with his parent's permission, thereby sparing the expense of hiring a nurse. Rabbi Tukachinsky, in turn, posed this question to three of the great *rabbonim* of *Yerushalayim* at that time, each of whom provided a response.²¹ The Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Herzog, argued in favor of the ruling of the *Minchas Chinuch*, that this could be allowed. Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank was hesitant to be lenient, and felt that one should not allow this. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, whom Rabbi Tukachinsky described as 'a rising star'²² (due to his young age), wrote that in a situation where there are other possible reasons to rule leniently, one can certainly add to them the opinion of the *Minchas Chinuch* and allow the child to administer the injections.²³

Rabbi Tukachinsky presented another reason to rule leniently in this case. He argued that if the child does not give the injections, it would be necessary to pay someone else to do so. Although there is a *mitzvah* to honor one's parents, a child is not legally obligated to pay for such an expense. Therefore, from the child's perspective it is as though there is no one else available to administer the injections, and the child can do so. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach cites that the *Sefer Yafeh Le'Lev*²⁴ agrees with this logic and, therefore, states that in conjunction with the argument of the *Minchas Chinuch* there is reason to be lenient.

With these facts in mind, we can now address the issue of a child performing dental work on his or her father. According to the *Minchas Chinuch*, if a parent gives a child permission to carry out the above noted service, the child may do so even though it will cause the parent to bleed. Among recent *poskim*, *Rav* Breisch in the *Teshuvos Chelkas Yaakov*,²⁵ seems to feel that one can be lenient and rely on the ruling of the *Minchas Chinuch*.²⁶ This is also the opinion of *Rav* Heinemann, who rules that one may permit a child to perform dental work on his or her parent, if the parent gives consent due to financial considerations, and the child wishes to comply.

1 שמות כ. כ.

2 לא תעשון אתי אלהי כסף ואלהי זהב לא תעשו לכם

3 רש"י שם

4 שו"ע יו"ד סי' קמא סעי' ד

5 עי' בט"ז שם סי' ק"ג וכתב להחיות, אמנם השי"ד בנקודות הכסף שם כתב שזה אינו נכון כלל כדמשמע מכל הפוסקים

6 ש"ך שם בנקודות הכסף

7 צורה גמורה

8 עי' בדרכ"ת שם סי' ק"ח ובפני יהושע ר"ה דף כד ע"א. אמנם לגבי חמה נראה דכ"רע מודו

9 עי' בדרכ"ת שם סי' ק"ח מו מה שהביא מספר יד קטנה, ועי' בשו"ת חת"ס יו"ד סי' קכט

10 שו"ת אגרות משה א"ח ח"ה סי' ט אות ה

11 בענין ציור כוכבים עי' בשפת אמת על יו"ד סי' קמא סעי' ד, הובא בשו"ת שבת הקהתי ח"ו סי' ש

12 ארבעים יכנו ולא יוסף פן יוסף וגו' (דברים כה, ג), ועי' בשו"ע ח"מ סי' תכ סעי' א

13 עי' שם סעי' יד

14 שו"ע יו"ד סי' שלו סעי' א

15 מכה אביו ואמו וגו' (שמות כא, טו)

16 רמ"א יו"ד סי' רמא סעי' א

17 שו"ע רמ"א יו"ד סי' רמא סעי' ג

18 החיד"א בברכי יוסף יו"ד סי' רמ שו"ת ברכה אות ח בתחילה הביא שבספר פענח רזא (שמות כא, יז) משמע שמותר, אולם שוב כתב שבשאלות פ' משפטים (סוף סי' ט) מפורש לאסור

19 טורי אבן מגילה דף כח ע"א (ד"ה אל תקרי) הובא בברכי יוסף שם, נצי"ב בהעמק שאלה על השאלות שם

20 מנחת חינוך מצוה מח

21 הכל נמצא בגשר החיים להגרי"מ

22 תוקצינסקי ח"ב עמ' ד"כ

23 "כוכב הגונה החדש"

23 תשובה זו נדפס ג"כ בשו"ת מנחת שלמה ח"א סי' לב, ושם הוסיף הערה בשולי העמוד הודן בדברי השאלות הנ"ל, ויש להעיר שבכל התשובה לא הזכר שהטורי אבן וחד"א מחמירים

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Rice: Nature's Answer to Hashem's Blessing

RABBI TZVI ROSEN, EDITOR



It has been touted as nature's most versatile food. There is no grain that feeds more people worldwide, and can boast that it is free of gluten and allergens. When the *Gemara* in *Brachos* discusses the blessings that are made before and after eating this grain, the mnemonic used to remember the *Gemara's* conclusion is Amen, אמן: "נפשות", "מזונות", "אורי", - "Orez", "Mezonos", "Nefashos". If you haven't guessed by now, the grain we are discussing is *Oryza Sativa*, otherwise known in *Talmudic* terms as "Orez", "אורי".¹ We know it simply as rice.

Believe it or not, there are over 7,000 varieties of rice grown worldwide. Most of the world's rice supply grows in the Far East, where rice is the main staple. Rice consumption in the Orient is so great that it has to be imported from other rice growing centers, such as the U.S., where it's popularity is growing. However, it is nowhere near India's daily consumption of 1/2 to 2/3 lbs. per person.

In fact, historians concur that rice was known and grown in the Far East thousands of years before Alexander the Great, who lived during the time of the second *Bais Hamikdash*. Alexander discovered rice during his invasion of Asia Minor. Subsequently, rice was brought to Spain by the Moors in the 700's. It was the Spaniards who introduced rice to Italy in the 1400's, and to the West Indies and South America in the 1600's. Legend has it that in 1629, a damaged Spanish ship bound for Madagascar docked in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. A sack of rice seed onboard was given as a gift from the captain of the damaged ship to the governor of South Carolina. The rice seed was planted in fields in South Carolina, which became the leading rice producer of the U.S. for the next 200 years. Although rice is grown in many states (such as Arkansas, Texas and California), today Crowley, Louisiana is known as the rice capital of the U.S.

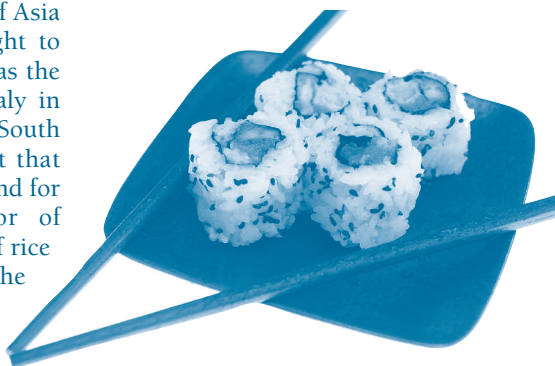
Rice is a cereal grain related to the other main cereal grains e.g. wheat, barley, rye, oats and spelt, all of which are considered to be main staples in the food pyramid.² *Halachic* literature refers to rice as being a "maizin", basic staple of sustenance, with some fundamental differences. A distinction is made between the ability of rice and the other cereal grains to rise and produce breads and cakes. The growing environment of rice is quite different, as well. Rice grows in land and climate that are not conducive for growing other cereal grains. It is intriguing to follow the journey of a kernel of rice from planting to harvesting and from processing to product production, as well as visit the *halachic* issues and ramifications along the route from plant to palate.

Rice is grown in warm climates and requires a constant supply of water. A rice

plant grows to a height of two to six feet, and the grain develops from the flowers on the head of the plant called spikelets. The rice grain, known as rough rice, is made up of an outer husk called the hull which covers the layer directly beneath it called the bran. In fact, there are seven bran layers that cover the endosperm, otherwise known as the kernel. When the rough rice comes to the mill, it is still intact with the kernel dried and the hull in place. If the hull is removed but the bran layers remain, this is known as brown rice. Brown rice is a more nutritious form of rice because the vitamins and nutrients are contained in the bran layer. Once the bran layers are removed, through a process called pearling, the nutrients are also removed.

Cleaning Process

There are two popular manufacturing methods used to replace the nutrients in a pearled kernel of rice. One method is to coat broken pieces of rice with vitamins and minerals and mix them into the pearled white milled rice. This is what is meant by enriched rice. The broken head rice (rice pieces) is sent to an enrichment company, where the vitamins are sprayed directly



onto the rice pieces. They are then sent back to the rice producer to be blended along with the whole grains as they are being packaged.

Obviously, enrichments have to be kosher approved. In the United States, the law requires rice to be enriched with additional vitamins and nutrients to compensate for the vitamin deficiencies created through the milling process. Due to the fact that the vitamin enrichments are certified for year round use only, and have not been certified kosher for Passover, domestic rice generally cannot be produced enrichment-free. For this reason, the Sephardic Jewish community whose custom permits *kitniyos*,³ i.e. legumes such as rice, beans, and corn on Passover, cannot purchase rice off of the supermarket shelf for Passover use if it contains nutrients.

The second method used to replace the nutrients is known as parboiling. When the rice kernels are still in their hulls, the kernels are steamed in large kettles so that the natural nutrients are locked into the rice kernel. After parboiling, the rice is then

dried to its previous state of moisture in a dry kernel at 11%; the hull is then removed. If the bran layers remain intact, the product is known as converted brown rice. If the rice is pearled, the product is known as converted rice or parboiled rice.

Consumers often call and ask whether there is a problem of *bishul akum* with parboiled rice. Rice is unquestionably a grain that is *olah al shulchan melachim*, fit to be served at a banquet, wedding or state dinner.⁴ Our Rabbis have mandated that an observant Jew must perform an integral part of the cooking process, such as turning on the fire, regarding certain products such as rice. This process is known as *bishul Yisroel*. Parboiling does not require *bishul Yisroel* for the following reasons. First, rice grain in their hulls are not fit to be served at a fancy banquet or at a regular meal, for that matter.⁵ Second, parboiling does not steam the grain to an edible state. Third, the rice kernel is steamed only so that the nutrients will be absorbed. Once the dried kernel is hulled and pearled, the criteria of *bishul Yisroel* would apply.

Milled rice comes in many sizes, the most popular of which is long grain. That is the size that is produced for typical consumer use. Medium grain rice is shorter and is a more ethnic variety. Rice that is broken in the milling process is known as second head rice, which is used for a myriad of products including cereals and manufactured rice products. Furthermore, the enrichments are sprayed on second head rice and are blended into the long grain kernels, which are now known as enriched rice.

Medium grain, sticky rice or sushi rice are various sizes and varieties of milled rice. These varieties are popular with different ethnic groups. Sushi rice is self-explanatory. Sticky rice is the rice of choice for Chinese cuisine. Indian curries, puddings and other ethnic dishes use medium grain rice.

Brewer's rice is composed of the small rice pieces of broken rice kernels used in the brewing industry. Many breweries use rice, as well as barley, to make beer. In Japan, a rice wine known as Sake is made from fermented rice. Even though the rice is cooked in the brewing process, there is no issue of *bishul akum* because the intention of the cooking is to consume the liquid rather than to eat the rice. For this reason, the cooked rice is not disqualified.

Similarly, a question was raised regarding rice used to make miso. Miso is a thick fermented paste made of soybeans, salt and rice. It is used as a flavoring agent in Japanese cuisine, such as soups and sauces. In order to ferment the soybeans to create miso, cooked rice fermented with a special fungus called koji has to be added to the cooked soybeans. This mixture will then ferment for a period of six months to a year. The rice must be cooked to initiate the process.



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Since this is an intermediate step in the whole process of miso manufacturing, and one would not want to eat the rice itself, there would not be a question of *bishul akum*.

Another byproduct of the milling process is rice flour. Rice flour is a very versatile product and is used in baby foods, baking products and cereal manufacturing. Another popular use of rice flour is in the dried fruit industry. Dried fruit pieces, especially apricots, are usually shipped to bakeries or used for other food applications. In order to prevent these dried fruit pieces from sticking, they are rolled in rice powder. Similarly, dates are commonly rolled in oat flour. For this reason, dried fruit requires a strict and reliable Kosher for Passover certification to ensure that the dried fruit is not rolled in the powder and does not come into contact with any other fruit in the packaging areas.

Aromatic rice, such as basmati or jasmine, is a variety of long grain rice that has been naturally aged to develop its rich full-bodied flavor. Aromatic rice has become very popular. Since no additional flavorings are added, there are no *kashrus* problems associated with aromatic rice.

Manufacturing Processes

Rice's versatility knows no bounds. Rice can be cooked, seasoned, popped, fermented, instantized, used as a milk substitute or made into wine. The possibilities are endless. Each manufacturing application has its own set of concerns. Let's begin.

1. Instant Rice

Instant Rice is a long grain rice product that has been precooked and re-dried. It is sold as a boil-in-bag product, minute rice, or simply instant rice. Instant rice does not require thorough cooking; in fact, it does not need to be re-cooked at all! Just let the instant rice sit in cold water for a few minutes and it will re-hydrate into a perfectly edible product. This discovery was an incredible eye opener. Incontrovertibly, rice requires *bishul Yisroel*. There are *Halachic* opinions stating that if a fully cooked product requiring *bishul Yisroel* is dehydrated and requires a second cooking, it is considered *bishul Yisroel* if a *Yehudi* recooks it.⁶ This was the common assumption about instant rice, which changed once it was discovered that instant rice could be hydrated in cold water. Today, the policy is to light the boilers that provide the steam to cook the instant rice. However, there still remains a discrepancy among *Kashrus* Agencies as to whether instant rice requires *bishul Yisroel*. Furthermore, lighting the boiler is a solution for *Ashkenazim*, who follow the *Ramah's* position that lighting the fire fulfills the *bishul Yisroel* criteria.⁷ *Sephardim*, who follow the opinion of *Maron Beit Yosef*,⁸ require that a *Yehudi* actually place the rice

in the cooker before lighting the fire at the beginning of the process.

This cooked rice product is not the only item that has gained popularity in the contemporary kosher marketplace. There is a growing popularity in the mainstream marketplace for Mediterranean diet delicacies, such as dolmas (the *Sephardic* version of stuffed cabbage). Brined grape leaves are used instead of cabbage leaves, and the filling is a combination of cooked rice, herbs and spices. Most productions, as you might guess, take place in countries rich in Mediterranean cuisine such as Turkey, Greece and even Bulgaria. Some organizations require *hashgacha temidis* during the specialty production; other agencies allow the rice cooker or boiler to be turned on prior to the production. These companies typically do not deal with non-kosher ingredients. However, *bishul akum* has become a front burner issue with these products.

2. Rice Blends

A very popular rice combination is long grain and wild rice. Wild rice is not a rice variety, but rather a grass that blends well with rice. Rice pilaf is a combination of rice, pasta and seasonings. Certification is a *must* for the seasoned product, as we will soon see.

3. Seasoned Rice

Any seasoned rice product requires reliable kosher certification. Spices, seasoning blends, hydrolyzed vegetable proteins, oils and oleoresins must be carefully reviewed. Typically, rice producers flavor their seasoned rice with dehydrated meat or chicken, as well as non-kosher cheeses. Although the seasonings are blended cold, the same fill lines are used for both kosher and non-kosher blends. Careful production scheduling, cleaning and kashering of equipment, and labeling of finished goods have to be set in place before certifying any seasoned rice product.

4. Rice Cakes

A seemingly simple healthy and kosher rice snack is a relatively new invention called the rice cake. Brown rice kernels are placed in a disc-like popper. Steam is applied and puts pressure on the rice, causing it to pop, taking on the shape of the disc and - voila - you get a healthy rice cake. Rice cakes come in a variety of flavors. Flavorings are added directly into the rice cake disc so that the flavor will be blended as the rice pops. One rice cake manufacturer introduced a new line of cheddar cheese flavored rice cakes. Their machinery could not be kashered; hence, their kosher certification was revoked.

5. Sake & other fermented rice products

Sake is Japanese rice wine that is fermented but not distilled. It resembles beer rather than wine; however, it is not carbonated so its taste is similar to that of wine. There are five types of sake produced in Japan. Junmai is pure sake, which means that only rice is used in its production. Other varieties add a small amount of distilled alcohol to the blend. All sake sold in the U.S. is Junmai. Other varieties are taxed at such a high rate that it would make the cost prohibitive. Therefore, sake

can be used without special kosher certification. Rice is also used as an additional ingredient in the production of beer, along with barley. Some beer beverages are made from rice and sorghum.

Rice vinegar is a popular vinegar that is used in both Chinese and Japanese cuisine. It is fermented from glutinous rice or rice wine. The style of rice vinegar changes depending upon the variety of rice used in the fermentation process. Believe it or not, black rice vinegar comes from black rice, red rice vinegar from red rice, and white rice vinegar from - you guessed it - white rice. Seasoned rice vinegar is a combination of sake and rice vinegar. Rice vinegars vary in their acidity and taste. They are milder than distilled grain vinegar and have specific applications in Chinese, Japanese and other Oriental cuisine. Of course, all varieties of rice vinegar require reliable kosher certification.

Ingrained Identity Crisis

The *Talmud* provides a brief discourse regarding the correct *bracha* one makes before eating *orez*, אורי. If one chews the kernel, the blessing made is the same as for vegetables, *Hoadama*. However, if the *orez* is ground, baked or cooked the *bracha* made is *Mezonos*, the same as for cakes and cookies. The first question the commentaries grapple with is the type of grain being discussed. *Rashi* maintains that *orez* is millet. *Tosfos* takes issue with that interpretation and maintains that *orez* is rice. Based on the fact that rice was not introduced into Europe until the 1400's, it is possible that neither *Rashi* nor the *Baalei Tosfos* actually saw rice. Furthermore, when the *Shulchan Aruch* discusses this issue, the more contemporary commentators are split regarding the identity of *orez*. The *Vilna Gaon* opines that *orez* is rice, which is consistent with the *Mishna Brura's* conclusion.

The *poskim*, *halachic* authorities who determine Jewish law, posit many opinions regarding the *bracha* one should make on conventionally cooked rice, whether it is *Hoadama* or *Mezonos*. They also question the proper final blessing for rice, whether it is the specific blessing one makes on baked goods of the five grains, "*Al Hamichya*", or the generic final blessing for other foods and beverages, "*Borei Nefashos*". As we mentioned at the start of our journey, the Hebrew mnemonic of *Amen*, אמן - *Aleph, Mem, Nun* - bears the final key: "נפשות", "מונות", "אורי" - *Orez, Mezonos, Nefashos* - a real blessing in disguise.

¹ *Tosfos - Berochos* 37A, D"H *Rashi*

² *Orach Chaim* 208, *Mishna Brura* 28

³ *Orach Chaim* 453:1

⁴ *Yoreh Deah* 113:1

⁵ *Yoreh Deah* 113:2, *Rema*

⁶ *Yoreh Deah* 113:12, *Yad Efraim*

⁷ *Yoreh Deah* 113:7, *Rema*

⁸ *Yoreh Deah* 113:8



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(see letter of certification)

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(see letter of certification)

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BEWARE: *Glatt* May Not Always Mean *Kosher*



RABBI MOSHE HEINEMANN
STAR-K RABBINIC ADMINISTRATOR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

that was determined to be terminal had the animal lived, the animal would more than likely be *treif*.

While some *treif* characteristics may be determined by external examination, an animal or fowl cannot be kosher approved before being examined internally. The internal examination determines that the internal organs are free from any holes, punctures, defects, or disease that would disqualify the animal and render it non-kosher, *treif*.

During the internal examination, it is especially common to find adhesions on the animal's lungs. An adhesion is an abnormal condition in which body tissues are united by fibrous tissues. These adhesions may be indicative of a puncture in the lung wall underneath the adhesion. A puncture of the lung will disqualify an animal and render it *treif*. However, at times the adhesion on the lung is not hiding a puncture. This can be determined through careful, skillful removal of the adhesion. Once removed, the adhesionless lung can be tested by blowing it up with air and submerging the lung underwater. If air bubbles appear in the water, it is an indication that the lung has been punctured and the animal is *treif*. If the submerged lung is airtight, the animal is kosher, but not *glatt* kosher.

What is Glatt Kosher?

If, after the *shochet's* careful initial inspection, the lung was found to be free of adhesions, the animal is *glatt* kosher. Generally speaking, it was the custom of the *Ashkenazi* Jews of European descent, to eat *glatt* and non-*glatt* meats and accept both as kosher. Certain *Sephardic* communities, of Spanish and Mid-Eastern descent, required an animal to be *glatt* in order to be considered kosher. This superior criteria is known as *Bais Yosef Glatt*.

The *glatt* criteria applies to the meat of *gassos*, adult large herd animals. This list includes the meat of steer, heifers, bulls, cows and buffalo. Therefore, a butcher could legitimately advertise *glatt* kosher rib steaks and kosher rib steaks. However, deer, sheep, lambs, calves, and all fowl (chickens, turkeys, and ducks) always

have to be *glatt* to be considered kosher. This means that adhesions are not removed from calf lungs, as such defects would render the calf *treif*.

Sometimes suppliers or proprietors will advertise *glatt* kosher chickens to promote their product. This implies that the "*glatt*" chicken is of higher kosher quality than "regular" kosher chicken, and that a chicken could be kosher without being *glatt*. This is a myth, since every chicken in the United States must be *glatt* in order to be considered kosher. In Israel, the lungs of the chickens are checked due to the prevalence of Newcastle Disease. Indeed,



there are two types of chicken that are sold in Israel - *Mehadrin* and non-*Mehadrin*. *Mehadrin* chickens, whose lungs are checked, are considered *glatt* while the non-*Mehadrin* chickens would only be considered regular non-*glatt*.

It can be reasonably stated that today's kosher consumer is caught up in a *glatt* kosher frenzy, and meat purveyors, suppliers, and manufacturers are the first to capitalize on this growing phenomenon. The problem is that there is a marked shortage of true *glatt* kosher meat; sometimes only one in twenty animals will be truly *glatt* kosher. Some have extended the *glatt* standard to include animals whose lungs have small, easily removable

adhesions; others have reduced the *glatt* standard even more. We must bear in mind that even if the meat is advertised as *glatt*, the kosher meat process does not end with the examination of the lungs. There are many more steps that need to be taken before the meat reaches the homemaker's kitchen.

Traiboring

Certain fats found in kosher domestic animals are forbidden by *Torah* law. These forbidden fats are categorically called *chailev*, and are found in all varieties of bovines, calves, sheep, and lambs. Fortunately, most of the forbidden *chailev* is found in the hindquarters of these animals.

In the United States and most European countries, the hindquarters are not processed for kosher use. Nevertheless, according to Jewish custom, *chailev* removal includes not only actual *chailev* but also various parts of the animal that touch the *chailev*, fats that may be confused with *chailev*, and those parts whose nutrition comes from *chailev*.

Moreover, the forequarters of these kosher species contain various blood arteries, blood veins, glands, membranes and tendons that must be skillfully removed by a trained expert before the soaking and salting kosherization process of the meat can begin. There are a number of reasons for their removal. Predominantly, the veins, arteries and membranes

must be removed because soaking and salting alone will not remove the blood. Removal of these and other parts allows the free flow of blood from the meat during soaking and salting. The removal process is referred to as "*traiboring*" in Yiddish, or "*nikkur*" in Hebrew. The skilled craftsman is known as a "*menaker*."

The art of *traiboring* is not new to the Jewish scene. This tradition has been practiced perpetually and has been handed down from generation to generation. Understandably, many communities have their own *traiboring* traditions with their own differences and nuances. The following portions of the forequarter are *traibored* according to the Baltimore *minhag*.



BEWARE: *Glatt* May Not Always Mean *Kosher*

Baltimore Minhag:

Brisket

1. Two blood veins that run through the brisket
2. Veins on the inside of the brisket

Brust Deckel

1. Gland that is found within the fats
2. Tendon that runs through the *deckel*

Chuck Sections

Fat, veins and the artery located at the first rib

Rib & Plate Sections

1. Removal of membrane skin covering all seven bones of rib and plates
2. Blood veins and tendons that run alongside the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth ribs
3. Fat located on the back and side of the meat beyond the twelfth rib
4. Cartilage of the thirteenth rib

Pastrami

1. Veins that run through the pastrami
2. Fats that run on the inside until the vein
3. Pieces of cartilage attached to the breastbone

Neck

Two blood veins on either side of the neck

Skirt Steak or Tenderloin

1. Membrane is removed from the front & back sides of the skirt steak
2. Fat sinews from the bottom tenderloin are removed

Shoulder

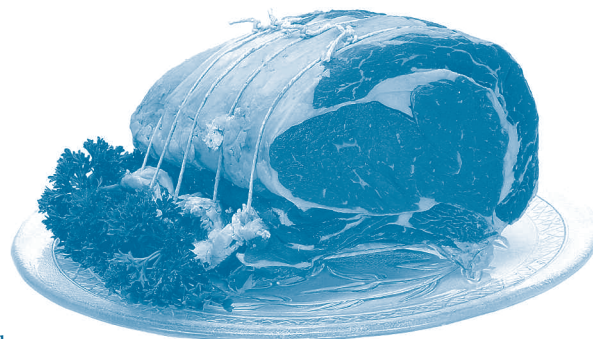
1. Vein on the bottom of the bone
2. Vein that travels the length of the bone and splits into three tributaries
3. Vein near the *deckel*

Tongue

1. Tip is snipped and the cartilage bones in the back of the tongue are removed
2. Two pump veins and two tendons on either side of the tongue are removed

Liver

The white fat on the bottom side of the liver are actual *chailev* and have to be totally removed. Note: The white arteries on the side of the liver, as well as any white spots found under the skin of the liver, are not *chailev*.



All meat and poultry must undergo a soaking, salting and rinsing procedure, *hadacha umelicha v'hadacha*, before the meat can be further processed. This procedure must be initiated within 72 hours of the slaughter of the animal or fowl. Some authorities permit the washing down of the meat within the 72 hour period to extend the time for the kosherization of the meat for another 72 hours. Most *glatt-kosher* facilities do not permit this practice unless the meat was actually soaked in water for a half hour within the 72 hour period. This extends the *kashering* time for the meat for an additional 71 ½ hours. The wash-down system has been severely abused and compromised in the United States. There are places that have been known to use a spray mist or damp rag instead of water to “wash down the meat.”

The soaking process must be done in the following manner. The meat must be soaked for a half hour in cool, but not freezing water (approximately 50°F and up). The exterior of the soaked meat must then be cleaned of any visible blood and then salted on all sides with *kashering* salt. In the case of poultry, the inside cavity must also be salted. The salt cannot be too fine, nor can it be too coarse. Table salt or popcorn salt are not suitable for *kashering* meat and poultry. The meat or poultry must be placed on a board or rack, which will allow the flow of blood from the meat. The salt must stay on the meat or poultry for one hour, and is then rinsed off three times to remove all salt and blood.

Since *traiboring* is not always done in a slaughterhouse, the fact that meat is slaughtered in a reliable slaughterhouse and is *glatt* kosher does not guarantee the final *kashrus* status of the meat. The process of *traiboring* and salting by a reliable butcher, kosher provision house, or homemaker, must be done before it can be rendered as usable for the kosher home. It goes without saying, if the meat was procured from a “kosher” slaughter which did not fully meet *halachic* requirements, even the most stringent *traiboring* and *kashering* (i.e. soaking and salting the meat) would still leave the meat in a state of questionable kosher status.

Integrity and reliability, not “*glatt*,” “*super-glatt*,” or “*Bais Yosef-glatt*” labels or signs should be the true guidelines for the kosher consumer. All too often, the conscientious homemaker gets caught up in hearsay, fancy advertising, and fallacious claims without bothering to separate fact from fiction. Therefore, it is always advisable to purchase meat that has been endorsed by a respectable rabbinic authority or respected *kashrus* organization. It is certainly advisable to purchase meat and poultry from a butcher who displays genuine integrity and commitment to *Torah* and *mitzvos*, along with his reliable supervision.

In this matter, as in all matters of *kashrus*, the guidance of your Rabbi is required.



Star-K Certification TeleConference Series



Announces Monthly TeleKosher Conference Program for Local Kashrus Agencies

In an attempt to alleviate the *kashrus* challenges unique to smaller towns, STAR-K CERTIFICATION announces a unique opportunity for local *Vaadim*, Rabbis and *Mashgichim* the world over. STAR-K's monthly TeleKosher Conference program will enable them to speak directly to *kashrus* experts from various agencies, in a non-political forum, posing their most pressing *kashrus* questions that are distinctive to their communities.

The monthly conference has already featured Rabbi Zushe Blech, Rabbi Yaakov Luban, Rabbi Moshe Heinemann and Rabbi Mayer Kurefeld. The conferences are archived at star-k.org ("Programs"). Local *Vaadim*, Rabbis and *Mashgichim* have been notified of the TeleKosher Conference program schedule via e-mail. For further information, call the STAR-K office, (410) 484-4110 or email TeleKosher@Star-k.org.

An additional TeleKosher Conference Series for the general public is scheduled for the last Wednesday of each month at 12 Noon EST, hosted by Rabbi Zvi Goldberg. To join the conference, call 1-605-475-8590 and enter conference 528-5502. Brought to you by www.Kosherclasses.org.

Star-K *Kashrus* Training Program

Star-K's *Kashrus* Training Program will be held Monday, July 28 through Thursday, July 31, 2008. This intensive seminar, held at Star-K's offices in Baltimore, Maryland, is limited to 25 students – *rabbonim*, *kollel* fellows, and others serving as *klei kodesh* – who have studied *Yorah Deah*. In addition to lectures, audio-visual presentations and a hands-on practicum, several field trips are planned.

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Star-K Kosher Certification

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

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(The Star-K Passover Book, not included in this subscription, is available for purchase in Jewish bookstores during the Passover season.)

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