

# Kashrus Kurrents

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## Undercover: The Halachos of Schach

RABBI MOSHE HEINEMANN  
RABBINIC ADMINISTRATOR



When our *Torah* speaks about the Festival of *Sukkos* it states "חג הסוכות - תעשה לך באספך מגרנך ומיקבך" - The *Sukkos* holiday should be observed at the time that you harvest your grain and your wine, during the fall. Our *Chachamim*, our sages, have taught us that this verse has another esoteric meaning. The *sukkos*, the huts in which we dwell during this festival, should be made from the unused parts of the harvesting grain and wine, namely the stalks of grain and twigs of the vine. These are the items that should be used for the *schach*, which is placed on top of the *sukkah* instead of a permanent roof.

Our Rabbis have further taught that this *schach* directive includes other items that are similar to stalks and twigs, *pesoles goren v'yekev*, that are no longer attached to the ground and cannot become ritually impure, *tamei*. Unfinished wood slats, corn stalks, and palm branches are popular varieties that satisfy the criteria for *schach*.

Many natural materials are not qualified to be used for *schach*. Leather is a natural product that does not grow from the ground; neither do cement or natural materials such as metal. None of these may be used for *schach*. All types of foods are not kosher material for *schach*. Included in this halachic directive are grain husks that have some grains remaining in the husks. Wood products that are cut and shaped into vessels, utensils, or equipment that have a hollow, would not qualify for *schach* because these products can become *tamei*. Furthermore, even if the wood vessels were to be broken and unfit for their original use and can no longer become *tamei*, they remain disqualified.

Although hollow bent wooden pipes would not be kosher for *schach*, hollow bamboo poles would be kosher because they grow hollow naturally, and were not fashioned by anyone with the intention of putting things into their hollow. Similarly, straight wooden pipes without indentations would be kosher, as well as wooden beams, even those with imperfections in the wood. However, the custom is not to use them.

Stems that are used for *schach* must be in their original state and cannot be subject to further processing. For example, wood is kosher, paper is not. Flax stems are kosher, flax rope is not. Cotton wool which has been combed out and no longer resembles the natural cotton plant, would no longer qualify for *schach*.

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MESSAGE FROM THE *President*  
AVROM POLLAK

## The Importance of Accurate Kashrus Information

As *Bnai Torah* we tend to consider ourselves sophisticated and knowledgeable regarding matters that we deem important. We are not easily swayed by glitzy advertising, nor are we apt to blindly follow recommendations from others unless we are convinced that the proffered advice is sound and based on actual knowledge. When making a major purchase such as an automobile, or deciding which *yeshiva* or seminary is the right choice for our son or daughter, we make a decision after deliberate and careful investigation of the facts. Of course, we do accept the opinion of others, but only after we are convinced that the one dispensing advice has factual knowledge of the issue at hand.

Unfortunately, when it comes to matters of *kashrus*, we often abandon our normal caution. Important decisions regarding the *kashrus* certification standards our families observe may very well be decided by the ill-informed opinions coming from a neighbor's friend's cousin. Talk about the blind leading the blind!

There are many reasons why *kashrus* misinformation is so prevalent. First of all, obtaining and verifying accurate *kashrus* information is a formidable task. To know what is really going on in a kosher slaughter house, caterer's commissary, or food processing plant, is difficult enough. And, like

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25 years of



kashrus leadership

# To Bee or not to Bee

## A Kashrus Guide to *Honey* and other Bee Derivatives

RABBI DOVID HEBER, KASHRUS ADMINISTRATOR

**F**or hundreds of years, the Jewish custom has been to begin *Rosh Hashana* with an apple dipped in honey as a symbol for a sweet new year. It is quite interesting that most honey in the United States is produced by the bees and collected by beekeepers in the summer - just in time to serve on the *Yom Tov* table.

Even older than this custom is the question regarding the kosher status of honey. Many of us are familiar with the famous *halacha* that states that derivatives of non-kosher species are not kosher.<sup>1</sup> This would include camel's milk or ostrich eggs. Since a bee is a non-kosher species, how is honey, which comes from a bee, permissible? Furthermore, if honey is kosher, are all products manufactured by the bee, such as royal jelly, beeswax, bee venom, and propolis (all described below) also kosher?

A brief entomological review of this remarkable insect is necessary in order to answer these questions: Bees suck nectar from flowers with their proboscis (mouth). The nectar mixes with saliva and is swallowed into the honey sac where enzymes from the saliva break down the nectar into honey. The nectar is never "digested," it is only transformed into honey by the saliva. Upon the bee's return to the hive, the honey is regurgitated, dried, and placed into the honeycomb. Beekeepers then extract millions of drops of honey from the cavities of the honeycomb by using a machine that applies centrifugal force to the comb.

**Why is honey a kosher product?** The Gemara<sup>2</sup> explains that honey is kosher as it is not a secretion from the bee; the bee functions only as a carrier and facilitator.<sup>3</sup> Honey is kosher nectar, which enters the honey sac, is transformed into honey, and placed into the honeycomb retaining its kosher status throughout the "transformation."

The second opinion in the Gemara permits honey because of a *g'zairas hakasuv*, a deduction from a *passuk*.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, 100% pure honey, whether from Montana, North Dakota, or any state or country, is kosher and does not require a *hechsher*.

Nevertheless, there are two important issues one must bear in mind when purchasing honey. Honey is usually described by the flower from which the bees draw the nectar. The most popular variety of honey, *Clover Honey*, is honey that the bees have processed from the nectar of the clover leaf. *Orange Honey* is nectar that originates from orange groves, where the bees have sucked the nectar from orange bushes and transformed it into honey. However, there are some companies who flavor their honey with an orange flavor and call it "orange honey." This orange flavored honey would require a *hechsher* as flavors can be composed of various non-kosher ingredients. One should always check the label carefully to verify that the product is 100% pure honey with no flavors added.

The second issue relates to the use of pure honey on *Pesach*. Potentially, honey can be adulterated with additives such as corn syrup. Corn syrup, a *yotzei min hakitniyos* sweetener, is derived from corn, a legume, and may not be used on *Pesach*. For example, soda companies must substitute this sweetener with liquid sugar when producing Kosher for Passover soda. Some honey producers have been found to mix the inexpensive corn syrup into honey and illegally label and sell it as "pure honey," with no mention of this almost undetectable "filler." Although this practice is the exception, one should, nevertheless, only purchase pure honey for *Pesach*, with a reliable *Pesachdik hechsher*. This problem does not impact the use of honey during the rest of the year.

**Propolis** - Another important product of the bee is propolis. Bees collect this material from the sap of a tree, and carry it in their proboscis. In its pure state, propolis is kosher and is used as an anti-bacterial and anti-fungal remedy, polishing agent, and preservative.

However, companies commonly process the propolis with other ingredients such as alcohol. Therefore, such a product would require a reliable *hechsher*.

**Bee Pollen** - Bees have brushes on their legs which collect the pollen from the flowers. The pollen is brushed toward the back of the bee and is pressed into baskets found on their legs. The bees add traces of saliva and nectar to make a more effective "press," because pollen is naturally dusty and requires a binding agent. This popular health food product is kosher.

**Royal Jelly** - The most important bee in the hive is the "Queen Bee," who attains her "royal" status by her constant extra nutritious diet of royal jelly. What is Royal Jelly? This product is a secretion from the hypopharyngeal and mandibular glands located in the head of the bee. It is rich in protein, vitamins, fatty acids, and amino acids, and is available in health food stores. It is also a common ingredient in various health food products and remedies. Because it is a *yotzei min hatamei*, an actual product that is secreted from the bee, royal jelly should be considered non-kosher.<sup>5</sup>

**Apis Mellifica** - This homeopathic remedy is derived from the body of the honeybee and is not kosher. However, as in most homeopathic remedies, the active ingredient is less than 1/60 and is therefore *batel b'shishim*.<sup>6</sup> If the inactive ingredients are kosher, and the honeybee is *batel*, this product would be *halachically* permissible to take.

**Bee Venom** - This product is synthesized in the venom glands of the bee and is released when a bee stings. Using a machine, bee venom is collected from bees and is used as an anti-inflammatory agent or for the treatment of arthritis. It is non-kosher<sup>7</sup> and may only be taken orally if it is *batel b'shishim* in kosher inactive ingredients. It may be used topically or by injection even if the venom is not *batel*.

**Beeswax** - Used to form the honeycomb in the hive, beeswax is secreted from wax glands located on the underside of the abdomen. The cells of the honeycomb are where bees grow from larva into mature bees. They also store not only honey, but various other products. Beeswax is sold both pure and with honey inside.

In its original state, beeswax is used in non-food grade applications, since the human body cannot adequately digest this material. It is commonly used in candles, lipstick, shoe and floor polish, and buffing wax for surfboards. Since it is not a "ma'achal," a "food," its status as a *yotzei min hatamei* does not cause it to be non-kosher.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, beeswax is considered kosher, provided that no non-kosher solvents are used, and it contains no non-kosher additives.

Although pure beeswax is generally not eaten, its kosher status is important for various reasons. Beeswax may be extracted to create a chemical used in the flavor industry. This extract is a kosher chemical (provided that all additives and solvents are approved), since the actual beeswax is not a food. It is even permissible for one to chew beeswax for its pollen content, or swallow it, with or without the honey mixed in.

The bee's ability to produce such a wide spectrum of ingredients used in both health food and snack food is quite fascinating. Appreciating these *niflaos haBorei*, wonders of our Creator, is key to understanding the *kashrus* ramifications.



1 היוצא מן הטמא טמא

2 גמי בכורות ז'

3 מפני שמכניסות לגופן ואין ממצות אותן מגופן

4 אך את זה תאכלו מכל שרץ העוף (ויקרא י"א: כ"א)

5 אמנם עי' שרית צפי אליעזר ח"א סי' נ"ט שמתיר

6 This is true if the dilution is at least 2x (1:10<sup>2</sup>) and higher, or at least 1c (1:100) and higher. For a full discussion of homeopathic products and their inactive ingredients, see "Vitamins, Nutritional, and Homeopathic Remedies: Kashrus and Halachic Guidelines" on our website at [www.star-k.org](http://www.star-k.org).

7 היוצא מן הטמא טמא

8 עי' אג"מ יו"ד ח"ב סי' כ"ד ד"ה וגם





## New Under Star-K Kosher Certification

### Consumer Products

(only when bearing Star-K symbol)

**Cheney Brothers** (Riviera Beach, FL)  
**FRONTE CANNED VEGETABLES**

**Delicious Delights, Ltd** (Bronx, NY)  
**MRS. STAHL'S COOKIES & KNISHES**

**First Vegetarian Foods, Inc.**  
(Baldwin Park, CA)  
**STARLITE SOY PRODUCTS**

**Fred's Organic Foods, Inc.**  
(Brooklyn, NY)  
**FRED'S ORGANIC FOODS**  
**SOUP & SOUP MIXES**

**G. Willi-Food International**  
(Yavneh, Israel)  
**WILLI-FOOD PICKLED PRODUCTS**

**Inteco International Trade Corp.**  
(South Secaucus, NJ)  
**ASSAGIO CLASSICO CANNED VEGETABLES**

**Lacas Coffee** (Pennsauken, NJ)  
**LACAS COFFEE BEANS, COFFEES**

**Maxus Worldwide Nutrition**  
(Hauppauge, NY)  
**MAXUS VITAMINS, SUPPLEMENTS & NUTRITIONALS**

**My Gourmet Oven** (San Diego, CA)  
**MY GOURMET OVEN COOKIE MIXES**

**Neshama Gourmet Kosher, LLC**  
(Beverly Hills, CA)  
**NESHAMA GOURMET KOSHER**  
**PREPARED FOODS**

**Samba Comercial Importadora E Expotadora Ltda.** (Sao Paulo, Brazil)  
**SAMBA JUICES**

**Springwater Sprouts, Inc.**  
(Honeoye Falls, NY)  
**SPRINGWATER SPROUTS FRESH VEGETABLES**

**Sure Gida San Tic Ltd. Sti.**  
(Malatya, Turkey)  
**SURE GIDA DRIED FRUIT**

**Trout Lake Farm LLC** (Trout Lake, WA)  
**TROUT LAKE FARM HERBS, TEAS, VITAMINS, SUPPLEMENTS & NUTRITIONALS**

### Establishments

**Noah's Ark**  
399 Grand Street, New York, NY  
**MEAT RESTAURANT/CATERER**

## New Under Star-D



The Star-D is a *kashrus* symbol of the National Council of Young Israel and is administered by the Star-K. All Star-D products are dairy - *cholov stam* (non-*cholov Yisroel*).

### Establishments

**Krispy Kreme #848**  
1450 Old Country Rd, Riverhead, NY  
**DOUGHNUT SHOP**

### Industrial/Institutional Products

(see letter of certification)

**Ace Biotech Co.** (Chungbuk, S. Korea)  
**ACIDS & ACIDULANTS**

**Ameraphos** (La Habra, CA)  
**FOOD CHEMICALS**

**Blue Mountain Flavors** (Kingston, NC)  
**FLAVORS & EXTRACTS**

**Borregaard Synthesis** (Sarpsborg, Norway)  
**VANILLIN**

**Bunn Capitol** (Springfield, IL)  
**BEVERAGES & DRINK MIXES**

**C.H.O. Soc. De Cond. Des Huiles D'Olives** (Sfax, Tunisia)  
**OILS/OLIVE OILS**

**Chemstation - Milwaukee** (Milwaukee, WI)  
**DETERGENTS & CLEANSERS**

**Delicious Delights, Ltd.** (Bronx, NY)  
**COOKIES & KNISHES**

**Foodtopia, Inc.** (Hasbrouck Heights, NJ)  
**ACIDS & ACIDULANTS**

**ICR - International Chemical Resources** (Milford, CT)  
**INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS**

**Lacas Coffee** (Pennsauken, NJ)  
**COFFEE BEANS, COFFEES**

**Natural World Trading Co.**  
(Shanghai, China)  
**RICE PRODUCTS**

**New Hope Garlic Co.** (Oakland, CA)  
**FRESH VEGETABLES**

**Rhodia Silica Korea Co.**  
(Incheon City, South Korea)  
**INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS**

**The Tartaric Chemical Corp.** (NYC, NY)  
**FOOD CHEMICALS**

**Total Fina Elf Lubricants USA, Inc.**  
(Linden, NJ)  
**LUBRICANTS**

**Tropical Paradise/Tropical Machines**  
(Ronkonkoma, NY)  
**JUICE & JUICE CONCENTRATES**

**Trout Lake Farm LLC** (Trout Lake, WA)  
**HERBS, TEAS, VITAMINS, SUPPLEMENTS AND NUTRITIONALS**

**Yang Ji Chemical Co.** (Kyunggi-Do, S. Korea)  
**ACIDS & ACIDULANTS**

### Products

**First Vegetarian Foods, Inc.**  
(Baldwin Park, CA)  
**STARLITE SOY PRODUCTS**

**Sweet Lilly's** (Plymouth Meeting, PA)  
**SWEET LILLY'S CAKE & PASTRY PRODUCTS**

**Vosges Haut-Chocolat** (Chicago, IL)  
**VOSGES CHOCOLATE PRODUCTS**

## President's Message

CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER



all areas where outward appearances can be deceiving, a cursory inspection by even the most well intentioned outside visitor can lead to erroneous conclusions. The problem is even more exacerbated when certain individuals--masquerading as *kashrus* experts and pretending that everything they do is "*EShem Shomayim*" (for the sake of Heaven)--deliberately distort facts and spread more false information to an already confused public that really has no way of knowing what to believe.

One bright spot in educating kosher consumers has been *Kashrus Kurrents*. *Kashrus Kurrents* is not a forum for the Star-K to instruct its readers about the merits of any one certification over another. Rather, it is a means of providing useful and factual information to help individuals understand the issues, so they can make their own intelligent decisions regarding the *kashrus* of a product. Each article appearing in *Kashrus Kurrents* contains sufficient background material about the food group subject being discussed so that the reader can fully understand the *halachic* considerations affecting the *kashrus* status of a particular item. It is important to us that the author of each article have first hand practical knowledge of the subject matter. In addition, we generally have an expert from the industry review the articles for technical accuracy.

Incidentally, our readers' comments regarding the new *Kashrus Kurrents* format were overwhelmingly favorable. We continue to appreciate any and all suggestions to help make this publication an even more efficient vehicle for understanding the complex world of *kashrus*. In addition to our new look, we have greatly increased our circulation by inserting *Kashrus Kurrents* into some of the popular *Torah* oriented newspapers. Many first time readers have called the Star-K requesting the purchase of past issues. Although we do have a very limited number of these on hand, all past *Kashrus Kurrents* articles are available on our web site ([www.star-k.org](http://www.star-k.org)).

In concert with the "new" *Kashrus Kurrents*, the Star-K has also launched a lecture program. This past summer's inaugural series of lectures, in which we disseminated straightforward and unbiased up-to-date *kashrus* information, were well received by the public. Its popularity has resulted in *Rabbonim* and community leaders contacting us to arrange lectures in their communities. We shall do our best to accommodate all requests. A list of available speakers and suggested topics is available from our office.

In the last issue of *Kashrus Kurrents*, I presented a brief history of the last 25 years of this publication and the Star-K. Although it is more than twenty-five years since the passing of M. Leo Storch, of blessed memory, the vital role he played as a founder of the Orthodox Jewish Council and several Baltimore *Mosdos* certainly needs to be acknowledged. We are also grateful to his wife, Hannah, who continues to support this publication in memory of her late husband.

In the name of the entire Star-K family I wish to extend our condolences to Yankel and Pesie Herskovitz on the loss of their dear son, Moshe, z"l. It is our sincere wish that in the future they experience much joy and nachas from their children and grandchildren.

Our best wishes for a *K'siva V'chasima Tova* to all our readers.

25 years of



kashrus leadership

# Star-K Kosher Certification Initiates National Kashrus Seminar Series



At the seminar (l to r): Rabbi Moshe Heineman, Rabbi Avrum Pollak, Rabbi Dovid Heber, Rabbi Tzvi Rosen

Well over 600 men and women throughout the New York area attended the opening series of Star-K Kashrus lectures held recently in Brooklyn, NY and the Catskill mountains. The seminars featured a comprehensive analysis of pertinent Kashrus and Halachic issues, along with a wide ranging open question and answer forum.

Under the leadership of the world renowned Halachic authority Rabbi Moshe Heinemann *shlita*, it's Rav Hamachshir, the Star-K has initiated a national lecture campaign reaching out to the community nationwide.

The initial Kashrus lecture series featured Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, Rav Hamachshir: "Beware! Glatt may not always be kosher: The truth about Kosher meat and poultry", Rabbi Tzvi Rosen: "Kashrus on the Rocks: An analysis of wine, whiskey, & beer", Rabbi Dovid Heber: "Medicines and Vitamins: Kashrus issues and Shabbos usage".

Dr. Avrom Pollak, President of Star-K, coordinated and moderated the lectures. Dr. Pollak introduced the evening by stating that consumer education has been a hallmark of the Star-K. Consumers have access to up to the moment Kashrus information by calling the Star-K Kashrus hot line, reading Kashrus Kurrents or surfing the Star-K web site. The new lecture series was created by the Star-K as another educational vehicle, to clarify issues and to dispel Kashrus misconceptions. Dr. Pollak then introduced the Star-K panel of speakers.

"There has not been a major Kosher

slaughterhouse in the U.S. that I have not visited", Rav Heinemann, Rav Hamachshir of the Star-K, told the audience. Rav Heinemann proceeded to treat his listeners to an informative mix of halachos, facts and stories about the contemporary state of *shechita*. Rav Heinemann considers *shechita* to be the "heart of any Kashrus organization" and he takes an avid interest in all aspects of *shechita*. The Star-K Rabbinic Administrator traced the emergence of the contemporary varieties of *glatt* kosher such as *Bait Yosef glatt* or *chasideshe shechita* which has recently appeared on the modern Kashrus scene. He dispelled some of the preconceived notions of "high speed" and "slow" *shechita* and explained how, in many instances, "high speed" was actually preferable.

Due to health issues that occur in chickens in Israel, the Rav explained the need for *mehadrin glatt* kosher chickens there while the same is not the case in the U.S. Rav Heinemann enlightened the crowd about the many pre-slaughtering considerations that are necessary in order to provide the consumers with not only a kosher product but an appealing product as well. He also touched upon some of the real challenges that Kashrus certifications have to contend with, such as the white veal issue. Furthermore, the Rav gave the listeners some real insights about the guidelines used by *Rabbonim Hamachshirim* to determine who is a reliable *shochet*.

The next speaker, Rabbi Dovid Heber, Kashrus Admini-

strator of the Star-K, is one of the foremost experts in the field of kosher pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals and medications. He gave the audience great insight into the manufacturing of pills, capsules, and liquid medications, and the relevant Kashrus issues. Guidelines regarding the taking of nonkosher medications were reviewed. Rabbi Heber charted the different degrees of illness that confront a patient on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* and what medications, vitamins and nutritional supplements can and can't be taken on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*. The whole field of homeopathic drugs and nutraceuticals was discussed in detail.

Rabbi Tzvi Rosen, Kashrus Administrator and Editor of *Kashrus Kurrents*, concluded the lecture series in New York with a lively discussion of the Kashrus of liquor, beer and liqueur. At the lecture series in Monticello he addressed the new Halachic issues confronting today's electronic appliances. Taking the listeners through a virtual tour of a distillery, he traced how whiskey is produced differently in various countries and discussed the Kashrus issues confronting these alcoholic beverages. Beer production was also reviewed. The discussion ranged from the clarification of beer using isinglass, an issue that was discussed by the *Node B'Yehuda*, to the brand new introduction of maltenatives and extreme beers that now appear in the market place.

In Monticello, Rabbi Rosen explained the Halachic problems that new electronic ovens and refrigerators present for *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* use. He traced the history behind the major appliance manufacturers' agreement with the Star-K to design ovens and other appliances that would be compliant with a *shomer Torah* and *Mitzvos* household.

As one of the world's leaders in Kashrus excellence, Star-K Kosher Certification has a commitment to the community. Experienced Star-K Kashrus administrators are stationed throughout the world to ensure the highest Kashrus integrity for their products. Every Star-K certification is under the strict guidelines and personal approval of Rav Heinemann making sure that the high standards of Kashrus are maintained and that Kosher consumers can buy Star-K products with confidence.

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Flax rope is problematic for another reason. According to *Rashi*, if the linen fibers were twisted into threads and braided into rope they are *posul min HaTorah*. The *Torah* disqualifies them as it does any other woven material.

Branches of a tree cannot be used for *schach* if the branches are still connected to their original source. If the branch was still connected to the tree while covering the sukkah and was then cut down, the branch would still be disqualified unless a person lifted the branch and then replaced it on the *sukkah* with the intention of using the branch for *schach*. Our Rabbis have taught us that *schach* which has an unpleasant odor should preferably not be used. Use of *schach* that has a pervasive foul smell is forbidden. Kosher *schach* has to remain fresh throughout the entire *chag*. Branches with leaves that will dry out during *Sukkos* or vines that will shrivel are disqualified, and are not kosher even while the leaves are still fresh.

Kosher *schach* material must be placed on top of the *sukkah* with the intention of being used for *schach*. One cannot place kosher *schach* material on top of the *sukkah* with the intention of drying the material and then change his mind in the course of the drying process and use it for *schach*. To this end, the *halacha* forbids the use of bundled *schach* if they are generally subject to drying. Moreover, our Rabbis forbade the use of this bundled kosher *schach*, even if it was intended for *schach*. This restriction applies to bundles of 25 sticks or more that are tied in the middle or at both ends.

How wide can the boards be to qualify as kosher *schach*? One may use boards that are less than 4 *tefachim* (14") wide. Even if wider boards would be set on their sides, these boards would not be kosher. It is the custom not to use narrower finished wood planks generally used in construction, as well.

As was stated previously, the criteria for *schach* is three fold: Items that grow from the ground, items which are no longer attached to the ground, and items that cannot become *tamei*. Reeds, straw, or wooden slats that are woven into mats would not qualify for *schach* if they were woven for the purpose of sitting or sleeping on or any other specific function. However, if they were made expressly for *schach*, these mats would be kosher.

Are bamboo mats that are held together with other materials such as string or yarn kosher? HaRav Moshe Feinstein *zt"l* ruled on venetian blinds that were made out of wooden slats and

were held together with cloth tape, which is *mekabel tumah*, that these blinds are not kosher. Even if the tape were removed, the slats remain non-kosher and are disqualified for *schach*. Based on Rav Moshe's reasoning, even if a mat was manufactured

string, which is an improper *schach* material, cannot be used for anchoring. Instead, a kosher wooden beam can be placed across the mat to hold it down.

Can kosher mats contain more than 25 slats, or would the mat be considered a bundle (*chavila*)? Since the mat does not need to be dried, it can contain more than 25 slats.

There is a Rabbinical question whether one can support the *schach* with something that is not kosher for *schach*. Therefore, one should not support the *schach* with anything that can become

*tamei*, i.e. metal rods or pipes. Also, one cannot use metal to weigh down the *schach* so that it will not blow off with an ordinary wind. One may, however, hold down the support with something that is not kosher for *schach*. If the *schach* is supported by wooden beams, which are there to strengthen the *schach* so that it shouldn't blow away in an unusual wind, then nails or string can be used as a support to the beams.

How much *schach* should be used to cover the *sukkah*? The amount required is determined by the amount necessary to shade the *sukkah*. The *schach* must be dense enough so that there should not be more sunlight than shade. However, it cannot be so dense that the rain would not be able to fall into the *sukkah*.

We have just mentioned some of the *dinim* of *schach*. There are many more *halachos* however, this article does not allow for a more elaborate discussion. In case of questions a *halachic* authority should be consulted.

May *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* help us fulfill the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* properly, and may we merit to see with our own eyes that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* spread His tabernacle of peace over us, the entire Jewish nation, and *Yerushalayim*.

<sup>1</sup> Devarim 16:13

<sup>2</sup> In *Hilchos Sukkah* (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 629:1) it is written that *schach* cannot consist of something that is "mekabel tumah." It is for this reason that bamboo carpet mats cannot be used for *schach*. In addition, *lichatchila*, kosher *schach* may not be supported by anything which is *mekabel tumah* (see *Rama, O.C.* 629:7). According to the opinion of *Rashi* (as brought in *Shaar Hatziyun* 629:20), spun or woven threads (e.g. string, yarn) are *mekabel tumah*. Rav Moshe Feinstein states (*Igros Moshe, O.C.* 1:177) based on a *Mishna*, if something which is *mekabel tumah* is used to hold wooden slats together, the slats themselves are also *mekabel tumah* and are no longer kosher for *schach* use. Therefore, Rav Moshe Feinstein explains that wooden venetian blinds held together with something woven are not kosher for *schach*. It follows that according to *Rashi*, bamboo slats held together by multi-filament cord (i.e. it is braided or twisted) are also not kosher *schach* (even if they are not made to sit or walk on).

## Undercover: The Halachos of Schach

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



for no specific reason, since the slats were held together by cloth tape, the mats would be considered an item that is *mekabel tumah* and could not, *halachically*, be used for *schach*. Mats held together with braided nylon filament thread would be disqualified for the same reason, since they are considered woven, according to *Rashi*. However, monofilament line would not be disqualified for this reason, because a monofilament line merely holds the slats together and is not woven. Therefore, if the wooden mats were made for *schach* using monofilament line, the mats would be kosher.<sup>2</sup>

A kosher monofilament mat must be placed on the *sukkah* in the proper manner. The following guidelines must be followed. The bamboo slats should be placed perpendicular to the beams and walls upon which they rest. In other words, if the monofilament line (which does not qualify as *schach*) is supporting the slats, the mat has been placed down improperly. One may not suspend *schach* with non-*schach* material. Furthermore, *schach* mats must not be anchored with string so that the mat won't blow away in a normal wind (a *ruach metzuya*), for the same reason



# Hot off the Hotline



RABBI TZVI ROSEN EDITOR

**Q:** What type of aged cheese requires one to wait six hours before eating meat?

**A:** Generally speaking, aging of cheese is an ongoing process, which occurs when the bacteria found in cheese breaks down the lactose (the milk sugar), creating lactic acid, thereby changing the physical property of the cheese, giving it a sharper flavor.

A good example of this aging process would be if someone were to leave a wedge of Muenster cheese in a nice warm environment until the cheese becomes “tangy”. The housewife would call it spoiled; a cheese maven would call it flavorful. Historically, flavorful cheese took about six months to age. The longer the cheese aged the harder it became. In Italy today, one can find some cheeses that have been aged for 24 months, which are impossible to break apart without a hammer. (It is important to note that if cheese is sitting in a refrigerator or cooler for long periods of time, it does not mean that the cheese is aging. An appropriate environment is required for the aging process to take effect.)

According to the *Rema* (Y.D. 89), one who has eaten hard cheese is required to wait six hours before eating meat, just as one who has eaten meat has to wait six hours before eating dairy. According to the *TaZ* (Y.D. 89:4), who comments on the *Rema*, the criteria for hard cheese is that it has been aged for six months, the time necessary to harden. However, in reality, cheese that has aged for six months does not automatically become hard. Stilton cheese, for example, is aged for six months but still has a creamy consistency. The *Shulchan Aruch* tells us that if the cheese is hard, one must wait six hours before eating meat. The *Shulchan Aruch* does not say that the cheese has to be aged for six months. If the cheese would harden in less time, then the six hour wait would be enforced. The *TaZ* above is giving a typical scenario rather than a time limit. Therefore, the Star-K’s policy for six hour cheese is cheese that has aged to the point that it can no longer be sliced, only grated.

(All answers are based on the psak of Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, shlita, Star-K Rabbinic Administrator.)

**Q:** Hydroponic produce in supermarkets’ vegetable sections is rapidly expanding. What is the difference between vegetables grown in a greenhouse and those grown hydroponically?

**A:** Vegetables grown in a greenhouse are actually grown in soil in a controlled environment. Greenhouses offer the benefit of keeping out unwanted infestation. Hydroponically grown vegetables are grown in a solution of nutrients and water, rather than soil. The *bracha* one makes on greenhouse grown vegetables is *Boreh Pri Hoadama*, while the *bracha* on hydroponically grown vegetables is *Shehakol Nihye B’dvaro*, because the vegetables are not grown in soil.

**Q:** I understand that peeled raw onions should not be left overnight due to health precautions (*sakana*). Does this adherence apply to frozen onions that are commercially produced and sold in the frozen food section?

**A:** Based on a *teshuva* from R’ Moshe Feinstein (Y.D. 3:20), it is our custom to be lenient with processed commercial onions.

**Q:** On Shabbos does an observant Jew have to close a web site that is selling products on line?

**A:** Yes. As in the case of regular business transactions, no electronic business transactions may be made on Shabbos or *Yom Tov* on a web site belonging to a *shomer shabbos* businessman. The web site may remain open for information purposes, if the shopping cart on the web site is shut down. The time Shabbos and *Yom Tov* begins is determined by the entrepreneur’s geographic location.

## Over-the-Counter Medications

In previous editions of *Kashrus Kurrents*, the laws of treating one who is ill and the use of non-kosher medication, vitamins, homeopathic, and nutritional remedies were discussed.<sup>1</sup> A חולה שיש בו סכנה, someone who is ill and whose life may be in danger, is required by Jewish Law to use any non-kosher medication if an equally effective kosher medicine is not readily available. A חולה שאין בו סכנה, one who is bedridden, or noticeably not functioning up to par due to pain or illness, or has fever which is not life threatening, may take medication שלא כדרך אכילה, in an uncommon manner. This means such a חולה may take bitter tasting medication or tablets manufactured with the intention that they be swallowed. One who has a מיוחש, a slight discomfort, may take medication which is אינו ראוי לאכילה, not fit for regular eating. This includes any item that has no food, hydration, or nutritional value. One may also take medication which contains a non-kosher ingredient which is בטל בששים, used at less than 1 part in 60. Some opinions also permit one who has a מיוחש to take non-kosher medication שלא כדרך אכילה. In addition, one who requires liquid medication, such as cough syrup which contains glycerine (an ingredient which may or may not be kosher as it may be derived from animal, vegetable, or petroleum sources), may mix one teaspoon of medication into two ounces of any beverage (1:12 ratio). The possible non-kosher glycerine will then be בטל בששים - (ומותר לבטל ספק איסור לכתחילה).

Ideally, one should purchase over-the-counter (OTC) products with a reliable hechsher. Star-K certified products contain only kosher approved ingredients. A product containing a trace of a non-kosher ingredient (even if it is בטל בששים) cannot be certified Star-K. Similarly, all products are manufactured without any keilim concerns.

Unfortunately, very few OTC products are kosher certified, and kosher consumers who require such products are often confronted with שאלות (questions). The Star-K has reviewed ingredients used in hundreds of OTC products manufactured by many of the major pharmaceutical companies including Bayer, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Glaxosmithkline, McNeil, Novartis, Pfizer, Proctor & Gamble, Pharmacia, Purdue Frederick, Schering-Plough, Shire, and Wyeth.

Note: After eating meat, one should wait one hour before swallowing tablets or caplets that contain dairy.

<sup>1</sup> See our website at [www.star-k.org](http://www.star-k.org).





# Approved Over-the-Counter Medications *2003-2004*



## Certified Products

The following is a list of companies with kosher certified supplements, health, and pharmaceutical products. Products are certified only when bearing the symbol of the certifying agency.



Amway/Access Business Group STAR-K	Adwe KAJ
Cell Tech STAR-K	Fielding Pharm. OU
Maxus International STAR-K	Freedra OU
Melaleuca STAR-K	KV Pharm. OU
Nature's Sunshine STAR-K	Landau Volover
Preventive Medical Group STAR-K	Maxi-Health OU
Shaklee STAR-K	Mead-Johnson OU
Sunrider STAR-K	Sanofi OU
Trout Lake Farm STAR-K	Solgar Kof-K

## Products Always Approved

The following are products that may always be used without kosher certification: **Antibiotics for an infection - except for those skin infections known to be non-life threatening (e.g. acne), Canker Sore Medication, Castor Oil (with no additives), Enemas, Injections, Intravenous (IV), Mineral Oil (with no additives), Sodium Bicarbonate (pure baking soda), Externally applied products including: Antiseptics, Creams, Dermatologicals, Ear Drops, Emollients, Epsom Salts, Eye Drops, Gels, Lotions, Oils, Ointments, Nasal Sprays, Powders, Rubbing Alcohols, Shampoos, and Soaps.**

## Approved Medications

This medication list is a small sample of frequently used over-the-counter (OTC) medications. Prescription medications are not included on this list. If a medication is not listed, it still may be kosher. One should consult a Rav. Certifying agencies are indicated next to products that have kosher certification. It is imperative that each individual understand that under no circumstances should one refrain from taking a prescribed medication or withhold such a medication from children without discussing the matter with a competent Rav and physician. **NOTE: Products are approved only when sold in the United States and in the indicated form (e.g. "caplets", "children's", etc.).**

**This list should NOT be used for Passover.**

### ANALGESICS

**Aleve** Tablets & Caplets  
**Anacin** Reg Tabs, Max Str Tabs  
**Bayer**  
 Children's Chewable Aspirin (81mg)  
 Ex Str Plus Aspirin Caplets (500mg)  
**Ecotrin** Aspirin Tablets (325mg & 500 mg)  
**Motrin**  
 Children's Chewable Tablets  
 Junior Strength Chewable Tablets  
 Regular Tablets & Caplets  
**St. Joseph** Low Str Chwble Tablets (81mg)  
**Tylenol** (see also Cold & Allergy)  
 Children's Soft Chews  
 Ex Str Tablets & Caplets  
 Jr Str Soft Chews  
 Reg Str Tablets  
**Vanquish** Caplets

### ANTACIDS

**Alka Seltzer**  
 Effervescent & Antacid Pain Reliever  
 Tablets (Original, Cherry, Lemon Lime, Extra Str)  
**Gas-X** Reg & Ex Str Chewables  
**Gaviscon** Antacid Reg & Ex Str Tabs  
**Maalox**  
 Antacid Liquid  
 Max Str Antacid/Anti-Gas Liquid  
 Quick Dissolve Antacid Calcium  
 Carbonate Chwbls - Reg & Max Str  
**Mylanta**  
 Reg, Children's & Ultra Tabs  
**Pepcid AC** Chewable Tablets - Dairy  
**Pepcid Complete** Tablets - Dairy  
**Phazyme**  
 Quick Dissolve Chwbl Tabs (125mg)  
**Rolaids**  
 Reg Str: Cherry, Original Peppermint, Spearmint Tabs  
 Ex Str: Freshmint, Fruit Cool Strawberry, Tropical Punch Tabs  
**Tums**  
 Regular - Asst Fruit, Peppermint Tabs  
 E-X - Asst Berries, Asst Fruit, Asst Tropical Fruit, Wintergreen Tabs

Ultra - Asst Berries, Asst Fruit, Asst Tropical Fruit, Peppermint, Spearmint Tabs  
 500 Calcium - Asst Frt, Peppermint Tabs  
 Cool Relief Cool Mint Tabs - Dairy  
 E-X Fresh Blends Tabs - Dairy

### ANTI-DIARRHEAL

**Imodium**  
 A-D Caplets  
 Advanced Chewable Tabs & Caplets  
**Kaopectate**  
 Reg/Vanilla, Cherry, Peppermint Liquid  
 Extra Str Liquid  
**Pepto Bismol**  
 Original Liquid  
 Maximum Strength Liquid  
 Original & Cherry Chewable Tabs

### ANTI-NAUSEA

**Bonine** Chewable Tablets - Dairy  
**Dramamine**  
 Chewable Tablets  
 Original Formula Tablets - Dairy  
 Less Drowsy Tablets - Dairy

### COLD, ALLERGY, DECONGESTANT

**Advil** Cold & Sinus Tablets & Caplets  
**Benadryl**  
 Allergy & Cold Caplets  
 Children's Allergy Chewable Tablets  
 Allergy & Sinus Fastmelt Tabs - Dairy  
**Chlor-Trimeton** 4-hr Allergy Tabs - Dairy  
**Claritin** Non-Drowsy 24-hr Tabs - Dairy  
**Claritin-D**  
 Non-Drowsy 24-hr Tablets  
 12-hr Tablets - Dairy  
**Coricidin HBP**  
 Max Str Flu Tablets - Dairy  
 Cold & Flu Tablets - Dairy  
 Cough & Cold Tablets - Dairy  
**Primatene** Tablets  
**Singlet** Caplets  
**Sudafed**  
 12-hr Non-Drowsy Tablets  
 Children's Non-Drowsy Nasal Decong. Chewables  
 Sinus & Allergy Tablets - Dairy  
 Severe Cold Non-Drowsy Caplets  
**Tavist** Allergy Tablets (Reg) - Dairy

### Triaminic

Cold & Allergy Liquid  
 Cold & Cough Liquid  
 Cold & Nighttime Cough Liquid  
 Cough & Congestion Liquid  
**Tylenol** (see also Analgesics)  
 Children's Allergy-D Liquid  
 Children's Cold Plus Cough Chwble Tabs  
 Infant's Plus Cold Drops  
 Infant's Plus Cold & Cough Drops  
 Severe Allergy Caplets  
**Vicks**  
 Chldrn's Nyquil Cold/Cough Relief Liquid  
 Nyquil (Original, Cherry) Liquid  
 Nyquil Cough Liquid

### FIBER

**Citrucel**  
 Caplets  
 Reg & Sug. Fr. Pwdr.  
**Fibercon** Caplets  
**Metamucil** - All Powders

### LACTOSE INTOLERANT

**Lactaid** Reg, Ultra & Ex Str Caplets - OU

### LAXATIVE

**Colace** Syrup & Liquid  
**Ex Lax**  
 Reg, Max Str, & Ultra Pills  
 Chocolated Pieces - Dairy  
**Nature's Remedy** Tablets - Dairy  
**Perdiem**  
 Caplets  
 Overnight Relief Pills  
**Peri-Colace** Syrup & Tablets  
**Phillips'** Original Milk of Magnesia Liquid  
**Senokot-S** (Stool Softener) Tabs - Dairy

### SLEEPING AIDS

**Nytol** Quick Caps - Dairy  
**Sominex** Original Formula Tablets  
**Unisom** Sleep Tablets  
**Vivarin** Tablets

### THROAT LOZENGES (certified)

**Celestial Seasonings Soothers**  
 Herbal Throat Drops - STAR-K  
**Luden's** Throat Drops - OU



# Star-K Kosher Certification Queens Kashrus Seminar

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2003 • 8:15 P.M.  
YOUNG ISRAEL OF QUEENS VALLEY  
141-55 77<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, QUEENS

Topic: **Kashrus Considerations**

MEAT AND POULTRY: **Rabbi Moshe Heinemann**  
CATERERS AND RESTAURANTS: **Rabbi Shmuel Heinemann**  
MODERATOR: **Dr. Avrom Pollak**

Question and Answer Forum to follow

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## Star-K Kosher Certification



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