It is not uncommon for food manufacturers to call us with a keen interest in kosher certification but who don’t have the slightest idea what it takes to produce a kosher product. What complicates matters is that they would like to have a kashrus tutorial capsulized into a telephone conversation. Obviously, we can’t give a thorough kashrus course over the phone, but we can categorize practical kashrus into three main areas: ingredients, equipment, and process.

Occasionally, there may be circumstances where both ingredients and equipment are 100% kosher and through a violation of a Rabbinic ordinance some foods or food products would be prohibited, while other food products undergoing the very same process would remain 100% kosher. This disqualifying process occurs when certain foods are totally and exclusively cooked by an aino Yehudi, a person who is not required by the Torah to keep kosher. When a kosher raw chicken is boiled in a pot of water by an aino Yehudi it is as non-kosher as chicken cooked in butter! Our Rabbis call this disqualification bishul akum, literally, "cooking of the non-kepler."
Food Fit for a King

Reviewing the Laws of Bishul Akum & Bishul Yisroel

Foods that are prepared by brining or smoking would not be prohibited.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED BISHUL AKUM QUESTIONS**

**2. Does bishul akum apply to canned goods?** The answer is that it depends. Canned soups and canned pasta would present a problem of bishul akum without proper supervision. Canned fruit would not present a bishul akum problem because fruit is usually eaten raw. As long as the fruit has been processed on kosher equipment with kosher ingredients it would be permitted. Canned vegetables that are either eaten raw or are not elegant enough to be served at a state dinner would not have a bishul akum problem. Whole asparagus, when served alone, is a prestigious food. Therefore, canned whole asparagus should only be used with a reliable hechsher which surely addressed the bishul akum issue.

**3. Is bishul akum subjective?** The bishul akum prohibitions can change depending upon the different culinary customs of the country in question. Canned mushrooms is an example of this subjectivity. In the United States, canned mushrooms do not require bishul Yisroel for the following reasons: 1) Mushrooms are eaten raw. 2) Canned mushrooms are not eaten by themselves in a prestigious manner, they are further processed in sauces or casseroles. Therefore, in the U.S. canned mushrooms would not be subject to bishul akum restrictions. In Israel, however, where mushrooms are not eaten raw and mushrooms are considered a prestigious food, the restrictions of bishul akum may apply.

Interestingly, certain Third World countries view potato chips as a prestigious food. The U.S. considers potato chips junk food. Obviously, in countries where potato chips are subject to the laws of bishul akum, potato chips would also be subject to the laws of bishul akum. **Does bishul akum apply to rice?** Instant rice and minute rice are products that are fully cooked and then re-dried so that the product can be easily rehydrated, e.g. boil in the bag rice. This product is subject to bishul akum because the rice was fully cooked and would be fit for a state dinner. Parboiled rice is steamed with the outer shell on in order for the nutrients of the hull to be cooked into the kernel. The kernels are then pearled and sold as raw rice. A good example of parboiled rice is Uncle Ben's converted rice. Parboiled/converted rice would not be subject to the laws of bishul akum.

**Does bishul akum apply to Rice Krispies?** The raw rice is precooked before being popped into crisp rice. Would the precooked rice be subject to the bishul akum prohibition? The Kelloggs' technical staff explained to the Star-K that although it is true that the rice is precooked before toasting, this pre-popped rice is rubbery and edible but not fit for a king's repast. The subsequent popping, which is not a disqualifying bishul akum heat process, makes the rice edible. Since the precooked rice is technically edible, although not appetizing, any subsequent process (popping and flavoring) would not subject the rice to the restrictions of bishul akum. Rice Krispies are not olah al shulchan melachim.

**The White House State Dinner Policy - The Star-K asked the White House executive chef what the White House banquet policy is regarding the use of canned products for state dinners. A specific question was what is the policy regarding canned cranberry sauce? We also asked whether potato chips are served at state dinners. The chef's response was as follows, “We would serve whatever the guest wants, however, we never served potato chips, nor do we ever use canned goods...everything is prepared fresh!”**

Note 1: Even though the White House may never use canned foods, if the food was first cooked before the canning process then at that time it is perfectly fit for use at a state dinner and the subsequent canning does not remove the prohibition of bishul akum.

Note 2: If a product is disqualified...
due to bishul aluf, the utensils are also considered non-kosher and have to be kashered. If stoneware or teflon-coated utensils were used, one should ask his Rav for guidance on kashering.

II. BISHUL YISROEL

As previously mentioned, when an observant Jew has played an integral part in the food preparation, that product is known as food that has been prepared through bishul Yisroel, literally, food cooked by an observant Jew.

The cooking processes requiring bishul Yisroel are: boiling, broiling, baking, frying, deep-frying and roasting. Some examples of foods requiring bishul Yisroel include: soups, shish kebob, roasts and rice pilaf.

Notable exceptions are bread products that are baked commercially. Bread/cake products have separate laws governing their use.

The Process - The bishul Yisroel process can be achieved in one of two ways: a) The food is placed in a cold stove or cooking apparatus and then the Yehudi lights the fire. b) The fire or pilot light in an empty oven is first lit by the Yehudi and remains lit continuously. After being lit the food can be placed inside by anyone. The first method is the optimal one.

Frequently Asked Bishul Yisroel Questions:

? If a pilot light is burning continuously, how long can it remain lit without Yehudi intervention and still be considered bishul Yisroel? If the pilot is directly heating the stove or the pot, as the old style pilot lights of a gas oven, the light can burn indefinitely and still retain bishul Yisroel status. If the pilot light indirectly lights the burner but does not add heat to the food, as the old style central pilot light of a gas cook top, then a halachic authority needs to be consulted to determine if the burner needs to be lit each time (even the first time) by a Yehudi even though the pilot light burns continuously.

? Can bishul Yisroel be achieved by setting a timer that will ignite the oven at set intervals? No. Since the Yehudi does not perform direct lighting of the oven it would not qualify for bishul Yisroel. In commercial settings (e.g. hotels, hospitals or factories) where large boilers provide the steam for the cooking equipment, bishul Yisroel requirements would be fulfilled if the Yehudi flips a switch or presses a button that directly ignites a boiler.

If the action that is done by the Yehudi causes an indirect lighting of the oven, that action would not qualify for bishul Yisroel. Hence, dialing a number that in turn trips a switch that in turn lights an oven would be considered a "grama", an indirect action that would not qualify for bishul Yisroel.

? Would a light bulb or glow plug that was turned on by a Yehudi and was burning continuously qualify for bishul Yisroel? The minimum halachic requirement for bishul Yisroel is "hashlochas kisem", literally, to throw a small wood chip into the fire. Any minor action that contributes heat to the cooking would qualify for bishul Yisroel. If the oven would be hot wired so that a bulb or a glow bar could be placed into the oven cavity, turned on by the Yehudi and left on permanently, the additional heat given off by the light bulb or glow plug, which is considered fire, would more than qualify for hashlochas kisem and would fulfill the requirements of bishul Yisroel.

? If an oven that was lit by a Yehudi was subsequently turned off, but remained warm until being relit by an akum, would the bishul Yisroel status of this oven be nullified? As long as the oven remains warm the bishul Yisroel status remains intact.

New Under Star-K Kosher Certification Consumer Products

(only when bearing Star-K symbol)

All Gold Import Inc. (Ontario, Canada)
Baker’s Gold - Dried Fruit
Ananias S.A. (Lakonia, Greece)
Ananias/Mega Oil - Olives
Bapa Fine Foods (Izmir, Turkey)
Bapa - Dried Vegetables
Compass Food Sales Company (Ontario, Canada)
Compass Foods - Dried Fruit
Consac Industries, Inc. (Valencia, CA)
Long Life Teas
Country Fresh Onions (Millersburg, PA)
Country Fresh - Fresh Vegetables
Detectable Delights (Spring Valley, NY)
Detectable Delights - Cake & Pastry Products, Cookies, Gift Baskets
Doggie’s BBQ (Teamack, NJ)
Doggie’s, Doggie’s BBQ - Prepared Foods, Sauces
Dupont Surfaces (Buffalo, NY)
Corian Solid Surfaces; Zodiaq Quartz Surfaces - Kitchen Countertops
see www.Star-k.org for details
Emeth Distribution (Paris, France)
Emeth - Oils/Olive Oils
Fraidy’s (Monsey, NY)
Fraidy’s - Bread Products, Cake & Pastry Products
Glenn Foods, Inc. (Freeport, NY)
Glenny's - Cookies
Goldmar Enterprises, Inc. (Winter Park, FL)
Goldmar - Chocolate Products
Hardol-Organic Products (Ramat, Israel)
Harduf, Truva - Dried Fruit
Jordan Sales and Marketing (Ontario, Canada)
Jordan Sales - Candy & Confectionery Items
KoKo’s Confectionery & Novelty (Rant Valley, MD)
Koko’s - Candy & Confectionery Items
La Fortaleza (Los Angeles, CA)
La Fortaleza - Tortillas/Tacos
Oasis Coffee Co. (Norwalk, CT)
San Alto Gourmet Coffee
R.A. De Jong B.V. (N.W. Franken, Holland)
R.A. De Jong - Candied Fruit
Raintree Essix (Metairie, LA)
Retainer Brite - Denture Cleaner
Rick’s Sugar Bush & Supply (Cass City, MI)
Pure Michigan - Syrups
Sunbeam Foods (Lynnhope, Victoria)
Sunbeam Foods - Dried Fruit
Tootsie Impex (Quebec, Canada)
Best Kosher Quality Sultana Raisins
Weberman’s Traditional Foods (Miami Beach, FL)
Weberman’s - Frozen Meals
Wilton Industries (Woodridge, IL)
Wilton - Parchment Paper

New Star-D Products

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).

Jonathan Lord Corporation (Bohemia, NY)
Cake & Pastry Products
Key Mix Corporation (Sykesville, MD)
Cake Mixes
Nutravil Technologies Inc. (Chantilly, VA)
Ingredient Blends
Sweet Surprise (Brooklyn, NY)
Chocolate Products
Ultimate Formulation, Inc. (City of Industry, CA)
Enzymes

New Kosher Doughtnut Shops

Under Star-D:

New York:
W. 23rd St., New York, NY (#825)
W. 125th St., New York, NY (#826)
Penn Station, New York, NY (#827)
W. 72nd St., New York, NY (#829)
3rd Ave., New York, NY (#830)
2443 Hempstead Turnpike, East Meadow, NY (#835)
849 Walt Whitman Rd, Melville, NY (#837)
45-10 19th Ave., Astoria, NY
(Main Commissary)
Pennsylvania:
461 Clairton Blvd, West Mifflin, PA (#1101)
A 25 Year Retrospective on Kashrus Kurrents

A MESSAGE FROM: AVROM POLLAK, PRESIDENT

Approximately twenty-five years ago shortly before “Pesach” 5738 Mr. A. J. Levin, a vice president of the Orthodox Jewish Council, began publishing Kashrus Kurrents. In that first issue, printed on the familiar yellow paper with the blue Kashrus Kurrents logo, it was deemed necessary to advise the Baltimore community that they cannot rely on labels or advertisements that merely states ‘Kosher for Passover’. From that same issue we learned that the fledgling Star-K organization had just inaugurated its kosher hot-line whereby one could get accurate Kashrus information Monday through Thursday between the hours of 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

A most welcome and popular feature was a list of items that did not require special Passover certification. Included were specific brands of sugar and cocoa as well as a number of commonly used over the counter medications. Compiling the list required substantial research by volunteers and Rabbi Eliyahu Shuman, at the time the only paid Rabbi on our staff. Rav Moshe Heinemann, a R’M at Yeshivas Ner Israel served as Rav Hamachshir who reviewed and approved all the information in Kashrus Kurrents. It was a novel concept for a kosher organization to inform kosher consumers about items that were inherently Kosher for Pesach and could be bought in regular stores at regular prices. The annual list was widely copied and most welcomed by shoppers at a time when the fare of available items was quite limited.

Back in 1978 the Star-K office was located in an empty classroom at Suburban Orthodox Synagogue and besides Rabbi Shuman, a part-time secretary, and part-time executive director completed the paid staff.

Now fast-forward twenty-five years. Kashrus Kurrents, today under the editorship of Rabbi Tzvi Rosen, has been published continuously and its lists are widely reproduced with permission in other magazines, shul and school bulletins, and websites offering kashruth information. Examples of some favorite lists are Kosher Liquors, Medicines, and Kosher Cereals and their brochos. Comprehensive articles have instructed readers on how to deal with the halachic intricacies of Shemitta, Terumos and Maasros, Teivlas Kellim, Microwaving in the Workplace, and the Do’s and Don’ts of Oven Kashrus, both during the week and on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Many articles have been simply informative and provide interesting facts about many different types of processing plants which prepare our daily foods. A series of articles prepared by Rabbi Dovid Heber, our in-house expert on the Kashrus of Medicines and Nutraceuticals has been most beneficial in elucidating the complex world of over the counter medications. Detailed instructions are given on how to cope with the situation of one needing to use a vitamin or pediatric formulation whose kosher status is questionable.

Each article that appears in Kashrus Kurrents is carefully researched by one of our Rabbinic Coordinators and then reviewed for halachic accuracy by Rav Moshe Heinemann. Happily, both Rabbis Heinemann and Shuman are still with Star-K. They are part of the Star-K family that employs about fifty full time and one hundred and fifty part time employees. Incidentally, that part-time secretary, Mrs. Pesi Herskovitz, retains the record as the Star-K employee with the most seniority. Today she rules the roost over our support staff in her role as office manager.

In 1978 the fledgling Vadt Hakashrus of Baltimore certified about 25 establishments consisting mostly of local caterers, bakeries, butcher shops, and restaurants. Support of the organization came mostly from individuals in the Baltimore community who paid membership dues, attended an annual dinner and inserted ads in a journal. A number of synagogues actively participated by imposing a one dollar seat tax for Kashrus on every seat purchased for the High Holidays. Today Star-K certifies well over one thousand locations scattered throughout the world. A large percentage of these companies manufacture food chemicals and other basic ingredients used by other food companies. Thus there is a good chance that some of the food you ate today certified by other Kashrus organizations will contain flavors, acidulants, artificial sweeteners, or seasonings certified by Star-K.

Today our budget is met almost exclusively from fees charged to certified establishments. With a great amount of “Siyata Dishmaya” we have balanced our budget allowing our staff to be paid on time. Fortunately, we are in the position of being able to make grants to some worthy mosdos. Most recently the Star-K has made a $100,000 grant to dedicate the Kashrus Library at the new Etz Chaim Center in Baltimore. Star-K, a not-for-profit organization, has the luxury of being able to devote itself to projects which do not generate any revenue but are nevertheless of vital interest to the world of kosher consumers. Our Rabbinic staff is sufficiently large so as not to be overburdened with caring only for fee paying companies. Our Rabbonim are encouraged to spend a significant amount of their time researching and disseminating information helpful to kosher consumers. It is this type of research that forms the nucleus of Star-K lists. We spend a great deal of time working with Rabbinim in small communities that do not have the resources of a large Kashrus organization. This allows the local Rav to do a much better job in administering kashrus in his own community. Often we consult and even subsidize nursing homes, university kosher dining programs, and other public institutions that cannot afford a full time Mashgiach so that even if they do not have an official hashgacha, they can still offer their clientele kosher meals.

As we begin a much wider circulation of Kashrus Kurrents, particularly outside the Baltimore area, I believe that our readers would be interested in learning about the makeup of Star-K. In the early 1970’s a group of “Baalei Batim” mostly former talmidim of Ner Israel, headed by Mr. Leonard Sperling, recognized the need for a strong local organization dedicated exclusively to dealing with kashrus issues. Kashrus standards would have to be set up in a manner that would be fully acceptable to the substantial population of “Bnei Torah” in the rapidly growing Baltimore community. To accomplish these goals they revitalized the pre-existing Orthodox Jewish Council, chartered in 1947, and persuaded HaRav Moshe Heinemann, who had already earned a considerable reputation for expertise in practical Halacha, to join their efforts. Several years later when the Star-K symbol was first registered the lay board of directors and officers, then headed by Mr. Hillel Soclof, insisted that the trade-mark be registered personally in the name of Rabbi Heinemann. The interest for this was to assure that at no time would a new board or group of individuals be able to take over the organization and dilute the high standards of kashruth set forward by the founding board. An agreement with the board and Rabbi Heinemann that the symbol could never be utilized for personal use remains in effect today. Thus Star-K is unique in that it is essentially a lay organization whereby all kashrus related matters are the sole responsibility of Rav Heinemann and the Rabbinic staff answering directly and only to Rav Heinemann.”

Many readers are encouraged to spend a significant amount of their time working with Rabbinim in small communities that do not have the resources of a large Kashrus organization. This allows the local Rav to do a much better job in administering kashrus in his own community. Often we consult and even subsidize nursing homes, university kosher dining programs, and other public institutions that cannot afford a full time Mashgiach so that even if they do not have an official hashgacha, they can still offer their clientele kosher meals.

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In future issues of Kashrus Kurrents we hope ‘Y’T’H to begin providing the public with more details about our numerous activities as well as introducing to you, our readers, the individual Rabbonim at the Star-K. It is this devoted Rabbinical staff who stand behind the symbol and assure the high standards and integrity that are the hallmark of Star-K. As the one in charge of administration at Star-K, I wish to reiterate our commitment that the interests of you, the kosher consumer, are paramount when formulating Star-K policy.
Acceptable Liquors:

- **BOURBON** - All Straight and Blended
- **BRANDY** (requires certification)
  - Boukha Fig (OU), Carmel (OU), Spirit of Solomon (CRC)
- **CANADIAN WHISKYS** - Straight
- **COGNAC** - Louis Royer (OU), Montaigne (OU), RB Lanzner & Co. (OU)
- **GIN** - All except Sloe Gin; Sloe Gin requires certification
- **IRISH WHISKEY** - All
- **RUM** - All except flavored rum
- **RYE** - All
- **SCOTCH** - All except when label states aged exclusively in sherry casks, sherry finish, port finish, or dual cash finish
- **TENNESSEE WHISKEY** - All
- **TEQUILA** - All (except Mezcal - with worm in bottles)
- **VODKA**
  - Domestic: All except those listing whey alcohol or flavored vodka;
    Flavored - First Guild (OU)
  - Imported (Reg. & Flav.): requires certification - Absolut (LBD), Carmel (OU), Finlandia, Goldenbarr (OU), Stolichnaya (OU), Yikvei Gold (OU)

Acceptable Liqueurs & Cordials:

- **ADVOSCOTCH** (OU)
- **AMARETTO DI SARONO** (OU)
- **ARAK** (OU) - Aloud, Extra Fine
- **AZMARA** (OU) - Coffee
- **BARTENURA CORDIALS** (OU) - Amaretto, Etragn, Hazelnut, Lemon, Lime, Mandarin, Sambuca, Amaretto/Hazelnut/Sambuca
- **CAMAYA** (Kof-K)
- **CARMEL** (OU)
- **CAMPARI FROM ISRAEL** (Kof-K)
- **DRAMBUIE**
- **FRANGELICO** (OU)
- **GODIVA** (OU) - Chocolate (pareve), Cappuccino (dairy), Chocolate Cream (dairy), Vanilla (dairy), White Chocolate (dairy) (Dairy Godiva's are cholov Chase)
- **KAHLUA** (ONLY WHEN BOTTLED IN MEXICO OR BOTTLES STILL Bearing OU)
- **KAVA** (B'datz) - Coffee
- **KIJUFA** (OU) - Cherry-Chocolate Cherry, Cherry, Black Raspberry
- **KOKO** (B'datz) - Chocolate
- **LEROUX** (OU & OUD)
- **MARASKA** (STAR-K) - Slivovitz, Cherrica, Winhiak
- **MELODY** (OU) - Banana, Cherry, Chocolate, Peach, Triple Sec
- **PEACOCK** (CRC) - Pear, Chocolate
- **PETER HERRING** (OU) - Cherry, Sherry
- **R. JELINEK** (OU) - Slivovitz
- **SABRA** (OU) - Chocolate Orange, Coffee
- **SPIRIT OF SOLOMON** (CRC) - Amaretto, Apricot, Cherry, Chocolate, Chocolate Mint, Chocolate Truffle, Citrus, Coffee, Kirschwasser, Lemon, Orange, Peach, Pear, Strawberry, Winhiak
- **TAAM PREE** (CRC)

Some Scotch - Not Recommended

- **ABERLOUR** - sherry wood finish
- **BALVENIE** - 12 year old (sherry casks)
- **BLACK BUSHNELL** (sherry casks)
- **GLENDRONACH** - (sherry casks)
- **GLENMORANGIE PORT** - 12 year old
- **MACALLAN**

Popular Liqueurs - Not Recommended

- **B & B LIQUEUR**
- **BAILEY’S IRISH CREAM**
- **BENEDICTINE**
- **BOLS**
- **CHAMBORD**
- **COINTREAU**
- **CAMPARI** - (EXCEPT FROM ISRAEL WITH KOF-K)
- **CRISTAL AGUARDIENTE**
- **DON QUIXOTE RUM**
- **DUBONETT**
- **GALLIANO**
- **GOLD SCHLAGER**
- **GRAND MARNIER**

**HIRAM WALKER LIQUEURS**

- **KAHLUA** - (EXCEPT WHEN BOTTLED IN MEXICO OR BOTTLES STILL Bearing OU)
- **OUZOTE**
- **PETER HERRING**
- **PEACH**
- **RAKI**
- **SAMBUCA**
- **SHERIDANS**
- **SOUTHERN COMFORT**
- **STOCK FROM ITALY**
- **SWISS KIRSCHWASSER**
- **TIA MARIA**
- **YUKON JACK**
Life is made up of a long chain of experiences. Some bitter, some sweet, some mundane, and some exciting. Let me share one with you. About ten years ago I had the good fortune to have an inspiring experience in Morocco, of all places. The purpose of my trip was to inspect various Star-K companies that exported olives and olive oil to the U.S. The inspiration came as a result of spending two days with the remnant of the once thriving ancient Jewish community of Meknes. Meknes was home to many Rabbanim, Geonim, and Tzadikim. The Ohr Hachaim HaKodosh, the great luminary who wrote the famous commentary on Chumash, was born in Meknes. The Jewish cemetery dates back 1200 years. Today barely two hundred families remain. The Rav of the small kehilla is a holy Jew by the name of Rabbi Chaim Kasous, who had served as the shochet for the great Rav Toledano of Morocco. The Ohv Hachaim HaKodosh, the great luminary who wrote the famous commentary on Chumash, was born in Meknes. The Jewish cemetery dates back 1200 years. Today barely two hundred families remain. The Rav of the small kehilla is a holy Jew by the name of Rabbi Chaim Kasous, who had served as the shochet for the great Rav Toledano of Morocco. Seeing the love and dedication, the selflessness that the Rav showed for his community, was too difficult to keep. Hence the restriction of pas akum. However, if the bread of the aino Yehudi was baked commercially, pas palter (literally bread of the commercial baker), our Sages permitted it, since the concern about social interaction is not relevant. In the event that bread baked by a Yehudi is not available, or even when a person prefers the bread of the aino Yehudi to the bread of the Yehudi, pas palter is permitted. Moreover, our Chachamim realized that bread is the staff of life. Consequently, placing such an all embracing restriction on such a basic staple, where intersocial concerns did not exist, was too difficult to keep. Therefore, pas palter was permitted. Can commercially baked bread, pas palter, be used without the intervention of a Yehudi in the baking process? Yes. The requirement of pas Yisroel is suspended for pas palter, including breads that are ulch al shulchan melachim, lit for a social function. Even for the Sephardic community of Meknes which is more stringent in its adherence to the laws of bishul akum with cooked food than its Ashkenazic brethren, the bread of the Arab bakery is permitted. A Yehudi is not needed to physically put the bread in the oven to bake, as would be required by them for fish or meat. The restriction on pas akum pertains to bread baked by the akum at home for personal use. The restriction on pas akum applies to breads that are made from wheat, rye, oats, barley, and spelt; breads whose bracha is hamotzi. Furthermore, pas haba b’kisnin products made from these grains, such as cakes, cookies, crackers, and flat breads, are also included. Breads and other bakery goods produced from other grains such as corn, rice or soy were not included in the category of pas akum. However, corn bread that is made from both corn and wheat flour or bread made from wheat sprouts, would be included. Ironically, were a commercial bakery to bake with this elaborated wedding cake or torte that was fit for a fancy function, olch al shulchan melachim, it would be permitted as a pas palter product, while a wedding cake made from rice or soy flour would be subject to the laws of bishul akum.

It is interesting to note that when the Shulchan Aruch discusses the halacha of permitting commercially baked cakes and pastries, the Rema paraphrases that in his community there was a type of “kichel” that was baked directly on the oven grate. To prevent the kichel from sticking to the grate lard or meat fat was smeared on the grate as a release agent. Hence the Rema forbids the product because of serious kashrus concerns. In fact when I inquired about the ingredients in the Meknes bakery, I was told that their bakery did not use any fats or oils in their bread.

The heter of pas palter does not mean that one can eat any commercial bread or pastry with reckless abandon. Any bakery requires reliable certification and ongoing supervision to ensure its kashrus.

Although the halacha permits pas palter, pas Yisroel is encouraged and recommended. The halacha clearly states that the requirement of pas Yisroel is fulfilled with a Yehudi’s minimal intervention in the baking process. This is known as hashlochas kiseim. This means that a Yehudi is required to merely throw a piece of kindling or a small wood chip into the oven or hearth, or blow on the fire to make the bakery products pas Yisroel. Although the wood chip “kiseim” may seem insignificant in comparison to the roasting flame of a baker’s oven, this is the standard that our Sages set to satisfy the requisite halacha.

Furthermore once the chip is tossed into the oven by the Yehudi, the oven remains perpetually pas Yisroel compliant so long as the oven is continuously hot.

How is pas Yisroel achieved in a commercial gas oven? A gas oven that has a pilot light that burns continuously will produce pas Yisroel products, so long as the pilot is lit by a Yehudi. Today
this suggestion is not so simple. In order to conserve energy and cost, the pilot light in new ovens works differently. It shuts off and re-lights with an electronic ignition device which reignites the gas burners. Naturally, if a Yehudi turned on the oven and the oven remained warm as a result of the initial lighting, the oven remains pas Yisroel compliant. However, once the oven is turned off, the pas Yisroel status is cancelled, until the next time a Yehudi re-lights the oven. There are techniques to overcome this problem. For example, a Star-K pita bakery ran a secondary gas line into the oven that remained lit, even when the main gas line was turned off. Other bakeries installed a glow plug or light bulb in the oven chamber, which create additional heat in the oven and when the Yehudi screws the bulb or glow plug in the socket, the requirement of hashlochas kisim is fulfilled.

Another method of producing pas Yisroel bakery goods is the “baking off” or finishing par-baked breads, rolls, or bagels. It is not necessary to bake a raw product totally, freezing or finishing a par-baked, or a not completely baked bread or roll suffices when the Yehudi lights the oven.\(^4\)

The pas akum/pas palter principle applies to bakery goods that are baked. That would mean that fancy pas palter wedding cakes or eclairs would be permitted. What would be the status of bakery goods that are cooked or fried on a griddle, such as pancakes, ice cream waffle cones, or cannolis? Those products are not subject to the laws of pas akum/pas palter. However, they would be subject to the laws of bishul akum! This means that a pastry product that is fit for an elegant affair, such as a cannoli filled with cream or a waffle cup filled with parve ice cream, would require bishul Yisroel.

Eating pas Yisroel bakery goods is recommended and is meritorious certain times during the year: during the Aseres Yemai Teshuva, the ten day period between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, and on Shabbos and Yom Tov.\(^8\) Although eating pas palter products at these times is not forbidden, one’s scrupulous adherence to these halochos is commendable.

We hope that our readers have gained a greater understanding of these halochos. Now we can better appreciate the old New York advertisement which stated, “You don’t have to be Jewish to enjoy Levy’s authentic Jewish Rye.” We now know that Levy didn’t have to be Jewish either.

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\(^1\) Y.D. 112.1
\(^2\) Y.D. 112 Shach 8
\(^3\) Y.D. 112.2
\(^4\) Y.D. 112.1 Rema
\(^5\) Y.D. 112.1
\(^6\) Y.D. 112.6 Rema
\(^7\) Y.D. 112.8, 9
\(^8\) Y.D. 112.12
\(^9\) O.C. 423.1
\(^10\) Star-K policy is to permit pas palter that is not oleh al shulchan melachim during Aseres Yemai Teshuva because Chazal would not have made the gezaira of pas palter more stringent than the laws of bishul akum.
\(^11\) O.C. 242: M.B. 6
**Consumer Air Conditioner Caution**

Some new room air conditioner units with electronic controls may not operate properly when set to go on with a timer (Shabbos clock). When set to go off, these units will shut off but will not go back on, even when set to do so, unless they are manually reset. This obviously is a problem on Shabbos and Yom Tov. For the same reason, in the case of a power failure, these units will not turn back on when power is restored. Call the manufacturer for specific information of which models have this feature.

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**Sefirim under Star-K Certification**

Mr. Chaim Schor (Baltimore, MD)
Rabbi Sion Baalhaness (Baltimore, MD)

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**New Under Star-K Kosher Certification Establishments**

- **Bagels**
  - 243 West 38th St., New York, NY
  - Bagel Shop/Dairy Restaurant/Take Out

- **Cafe K**
  - 1111 Ave. K, Brooklyn, NY
  - Dairy Restaurant/Take Out

- **Rolling Pin Bakery**
  - 9523 Harding Ave., Surfside, FL
  - Bakery

- **Safeway**
  - 201 Reisterstown Rd, Baltimore, MD
  - All packaged products from the “Fresh Meat, Fish, Deli, and Prepared Foods” Department, located in “Kosher Market at Safeway” area of store, are under Star-K when stated on sign/label.

- **Seaview Caterers of the 5 Towns**
  - 46 Locust Ave., Cedarhurst, NY
  - Caterer

- **Shari’s Steakhouse**
  - c/o Clarion Hotel
  - 6821 Black Horse Pike
  - Egg Harbor Township, NJ
  - Meat Restaurant

- **Sion’s Bakery**
  - 302 Reisterstown Rd., Baltimore, MD
  - Bakery

- **The Orchid**
  - 455 Main Street, Metuchen, NJ
  - Meat Restaurant/Take Out

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**STAR-K KOSSHER CERTIFICATION**

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

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