

Kashrus Kurrents

VOLUME 23 NO. 3

Summer 5763-2003



Food Fit for a King

Reviewing the Laws of *Bishul Akum* & *Bishul Yisroel*

RABBI MOSHE HEINEMANN, RABBINIC ADMINISTRATOR

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,

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★ National Kashrus Lecture Series ★

Tuesday, July 29, 2003 • 8:30 P.M.
at Young Israel of Midwood
Avenue L & Ocean Avenue • Brooklyn, NY

**Beware! Glatt may not always be Kosher:
The Truth about Kosher Meat and Poultry**

RABBI MOSHE HEINEMANN

**Kashrus on the Rocks:
An Analysis of Wine, Whiskey & Beer**

RABBI TZVI ROSEN

**Medicines & Vitamins
Kashrus Issues and Shabbos Usage**

RABBI DOVID HEBER

MODERATOR: AVROM POLLAK

Wednesday, July 30, 2003 • 8:30 P.M.
at Landfield Avenue Synagogue
18 Landfield Avenue • Monticello, NY

**Beware! Glatt may not always be Kosher:
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food cooked by a person not required by the Torah to keep kosher. There are two reasons why our Chachomim, Sages, enacted this ordinance: First, as a precaution against inadvertently eating non-kosher food; second, as a prevention against unnecessary socialization that could lead to intermarriage.

In situations where *bishul akum* would present a problem, our Chachomim have instructed us that this disqualification can be avoided by having the observant Jewish homemaker or a *mashgiach*, a kosher supervisor, perform an integral part of the cooking process, such as turning on the fire. When a *Yehudi*, an observant Jew, assists in the preparation, we say that the food is prepared through *bishul Yisroel*.

In order for the consumer to understand these important kosher laws clearly, we will delineate the circumstances where the prohibition of *bishul akum* does not apply.

I. PROHIBITION OF BISHUL AKUM DOES NOT APPLY TO . . .

Foods that can be eaten raw. This applies even to food that tastes better cooked or baked than raw (e.g. baked apples or applesauce). The reason why our *Chachomim* permitted these dishes is because we can eat this food without the intervention of the *aino Yehudi*. We do not feel obliged to the cook for his assistance in preparation of these products, thereby lessening any social bond created by the food.

Foods whose form and taste do not change through cooking. This applies even to food that would normally not be eaten without cooking (e.g. pasteurized milk or distilled water).

Foods that are still inedible and require more cooking to make the food edible. This would apply to partial preparation by the *akum* and the finishing process by the *Yehudi* or partial preparation by the *Yehudi* and the finishing process by the *akum*.

Foods that are not prestigious and would not be served at a king's table when hosting an official state dinner (e.g. baked beans or corn flakes). These foods are permitted because a person does not experience deep feelings of gratitude and appreciation when someone warms up a can of string beans. Therefore, cooking non-prestigious food would not bring on feelings of closeness between preparer and recipient. Any food that would not be served at a wedding feast because it is not elegant (e.g. doughnuts) would certainly not qualify for *bishul akum*.

Foods which are generally not eaten together with a meal or are not eaten for healthy nutrition (e.g. candy, or potato chips) according to many *poskim*, halachic authorities, these types of food would not be forbidden as a *bishul akum* product.

Foods of any combination whose

main ingredient does not qualify for *bishul akum* would be acceptable as long as all the ingredients are blended together. An example of such a product would be brewed coffee which is a combination of water and roasted coffee beans. Cooked water does not qualify for *bishul akum*. Although roasted coffee beans cannot be used without brewing, coffee is a prestigious beverage which is served at weddings. Nevertheless, since the water is considered the main component of the beverage and the coffee is considered a flavoring, freshly brewed coffee would not be subject to the restriction of *bishul akum*.

Foods that are microwaved by an *aino Yehudi*. *Bishul akum* does not apply to microwaved food. The Rabbinical prohibition of *bishul akum* applies only to conventional cooking methods, eg. cooking, frying, roasting. Food prepared through microwaving is not included in the prohibition.



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...

? 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.

? 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 reach a king's state dinner, 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 appealing, any subsequent process (popping and flavoring) would not subject the rice to the restrictions of *bishul akum*. Rice Krispies are not *oleh 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 prescription of *bishul akum*.

Note 2: If a product is disqualified



due to *bishul akum*, 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

Delectable Delights (Spring Valley, NY)
Delectable Delights - Cake & Pastry Products, Cookies, Gift Baskets

Dougie's BBQ (Teaneck, NJ)
Dougie's, Dougie'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

Harduf-Organic Products (Hamovil, Israel)
Harduf, Tnuva - Dried Fruit

Jordan Sales and Marketing (Ontario, Canada)
Jordan Sales - Candy & Confectionery Items

KoKo's Confectionery & Novelty (Hunt 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. (JW Franekar, Holland)
R.A. De Jong - Candied Fruit

Raintree Essix (Metairie, LA)
Retainer Brite - Denture Cleanser

Rick's Sugar Bush & Supply (Cass City, MI)
Pure Michigan - Syrups

Sunbeam Foods (Irymple, 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 - *cholv stam* (non-*cholv Yisroel*).

Jonathan Lord Corporation (Bohemia, NY)
Cake & Pastry Products

Key Mix Corporation (Sykesville, MD)
Cake Mixes

Nutravail Technologies Inc. (Chantilly, VA)
Ingredient Blends

Sweet Surprise (Brooklyn, NY)
Chocolate Products

Ultimate Formulation, Inc. (City of Industry, CA)
Enzymes

New Krispy Kreme Doughnut 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 kashrus 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, Tevilas Keilim, 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 Vaad 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 Rabbonim 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 hashgocha, 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 a bit 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 trademark 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.

In future issues of Kashrus Kurrents we hope IY"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.

“ Star-K is unique ... 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.”



2003 LIQUOR & LIQUEUR LIST

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 Lanxner & 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 cask 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) - Alouf, Extra Fine

AZMARA (OU) - Coffee

BARTENURA CORDIALS (OU) - Amaretto, Etrog, 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 *stam cholov.*)

KAHLUA (ONLY WHEN BOTTLED IN MEXICO OR BOTTLES STILL BEARING OU)

KAVA (B'datz) - Coffee

KIJAJA (OU) - Cherry-Chocolate Cherry, Cherry, Black Raspberry

KOKO (B'datz) - Chocolate

LEROUX (OU & OUD)

MARASKA (STAR-K) - Slivovitz, Cherrica, Wishniak

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, Wishniak

TAAM PREE (CRC)

Some Scotches - *Not Recommended*

ABERLOUR - sherry wood finish

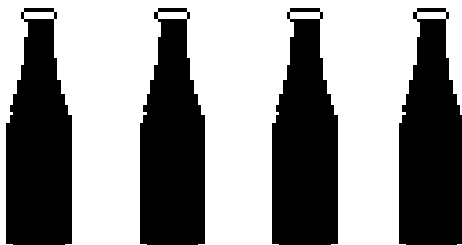
BALVENIE - 12 year old (sherry casks)

BLACK BUSHNELL (sherry casks)

GLENDRONACH - (sherry casks)

GLENMORANGIE PORT - 12 year old

MACALLAN



Popular Liqueurs - *Not Recommended*

B & B LIQUEUR	HIRAM WALKER LIQUEURS
BAILEY'S IRISH CREAM	KAHLUA - (EXCEPT WHEN BOTTLED IN MEXICO OR BOTTLES STILL BEARING OU)
BENEDICTINE	OUZOPETER HERRING
BOLS	PEACH
CHAMBORD	RAKI
COINTREAU	SAMBUCA
CAMPARI - (EXCEPT FROM ISRAEL WITH KOF-K)	SHERIDANS
CRISTAL AGUADRIENTE	SOUTHERN COMFORT
DON QUIXOTE RUM	STOCK FROM ITALY
DUBONETT	SWISS KIRSCHWASSER
GALLIANO	TIA MARIA
GOLD SCHLAGER	YUKON JACK
GRAND MARNIER	





RABBI TZVI ROSEN
EDITOR

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. Seeing the love and dedication, the *mesiras nefesh* and selflessness that the Rav showed for his small but loyal flock, I was greatly moved and inspired. Meknes, however, is too small to support kosher food establishments, so Rav Kasous provides kosher meat for the *kehilla*. But what do they do for fresh bread? The *baal habayis* that I discussed this with explained that the Rav inspects one of the local community bakeries which uses no questionable non-kosher ingredients and permits the bread. This bakery bread is a perfect example of what *halacha* terms *pas palter*.

As mentioned previously, our Rabbis have instituted an ordinance that would disqualify foods that are cooked completely by an *aino Yehudi*, a person who is not required by the Torah to keep kosher. Our Rabbis term this disqualification *bishul akum*. The Sages give two reasons for proscribing this ordinance: as a precaution against inadvertently eating non-kosher food, and as a precaution against unnecessary socialization that could lead to intermarriage.¹

Our Chachamim, Sages, have enacted this requirement for bread as well as cooked foods based on the same social concerns. Bread baked by an *aino Yehudi* is called *pas akum*. However the

halachic restriction of *pas akum* was not enacted in all situations. Eating bread together with friends and neighbors in a social setting is exactly what our Chachamim wanted to avoid. 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.² Consequently, placing such an all embracing restriction on such a basic



Reviewing the Laws of Pas Akum

staple, where intersocial concerns did not exist, was too difficult to keep. Therefore, *pas palter* was permitted.³

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 *oleh al shulchan melachim*, fit 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.⁴

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 an elaborate wedding cake or torte that was fit for a fancy function, *oleh 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*.⁵

It is interesting to note that when the Shulchan Aruch discusses the *halacha* of permitting commercially baked cakes and pastries, the Rema parenthetically states 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.⁶

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 called *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.⁷

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 lightbulb 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 kiseim* 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; browning or finishing a par-baked, or a not completely baked bread or roll suffices when the *Yehudi* lights the oven.⁸

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 pareve 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*,⁹ the ten day period between *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kipper*,¹⁰ and on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*.¹¹ Although eating *pas palter* products at these times is not forbidden, one’s scrupulous adherence to these *halachos* is commendable.

We hope that our readers have gained a greater understanding of these *halachos*. 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.

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

New Under Star-K Kosher Certification

Industrial/Institutional Products

(see letter of certification)

Addisol Corp. (Laredo, TX)

Industrial Chemicals

Advanced Chemicals (Hong Kong, China)

Food Colors

All Gold Import Inc. (Ontario, Canada)

Dried Fruit

American Color Research Ctr (Placentia, CA)

Flavors & Extracts, Food Colors

Arome America (Neshanic Station, NJ)

Flavors & Extracts

ASHTA Chemicals Inc. (Ashtabula, OH)

Industrial Chemicals

Beijing Ginkgo Grp Bio. Tech. Co. (Beijing, China)

Herbal Extracts

Compass Food Sales Company Ltd. (Ontario, Canada)

Dried Fruit

Conservas Martinez Garcia, S.L. (Murcia, Spain)

Canned Vegetables

Conservas Martinez, S.A. (Murcia, Spain)

Canned Vegetables

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Fresh Vegetables

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Ege Enternasyonal Ltd. (Izmir, Turkey)

Pickled Products

Elmeco USA (Hackensack, NJ)

Beverages & Drink Mixes, Cocktail Mix

Fenchem Enterprises (Nanjing, China)

Vitamins, Supplements & Nutritionals

Grand Mills (Kearny, NJ)

Spices & Seasonings

Hojiblanca, S.A. (Malaga, Spain)

Oils/Olive Oils

IngredienTrade (New York, NY)

Juice & Juice Concentrates

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Spices & Seasonings

Jiangbei Additive Co., Ltd. (Jiangsu, China)

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Canned Vegetables

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Spices & Seasonings

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Food Colors

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Coffees

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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.

Sofrim under Star-K Certification

Mr. Chaim Schor (Baltimore, MD)

Rabbi Sion Baalhaness (Baltimore, MD)



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Bakery

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Bakery

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455 Main Street, Metuchen, NJ

Meat Restaurant/Take Out

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