



# KASHRUS KURRENTS

SPRING 5783 - 2023 | VOLUME 46 NO. 2

## STAR-K GOES TO COLLEGE



AN INTERVIEW WITH RABBI MAYER KURCFELD

KASHRUS KURRENTS STAFF

Some of the top colleges in the U.S. boast a 10-25 percent Jewish student population. In 2022, Jewish students were well-represented at all eight Ivy League schools, with Columbia leading the way at 24%, followed by Brown (19%), Cornell (17%), UPenn (17%), and Yale (13%).<sup>1</sup> The continually increasing number of kosher and other Jewish amenities on the American college campus mirror these statistics – and act as magnets to attract Jewish students. For some, STAR-K's presence on campus offers a first – and sometimes only – taste of Yiddishkeit.

Rabbi Mayer Kurcfeld, a STAR-K kosher administrator, has been engineering and overseeing the agency's many certified on-campus facilities since 1999, custom-designing those that were not pre-existing. We asked him to describe the kosher challenges of certifying the ever-evolving college campus dining platform.

### KK: Which college and university dining services are certified by STAR-K?

RMK: We currently certify kosher dining at American University, Cornell University,

Franklin & Marshall College, Ithaca College, Johns Hopkins University, Muhlenberg College, Penn State University, Rollins College, Towson University, UMBC, Yale University, and most recently, University of Rochester. I constantly get inquiries regarding on-campus certification.

### KK: Why would a regional college campus reach out to a national kosher organization for certification?

RMK: One of the practical reasons is to attract more domestic and international students to their location. They understand that offering kosher on campus is a draw for some of their Jewish and Muslim clientele who prefer not to eat non-kosher or non-halal foods, and who – though they might not be religious – are interested in tradition.

Secondly, many times, it is demanded by the college itself to service all students. As part of their contract with the hired contractor (such as Aramark or Sodexo), it must also provide kosher for those who demand it – much as it must provide an allergen-free station or halal offerings.

## Who Has Whom... Over the Barrel?



RABBI TZVI ROSEN  
STAR-K KASHRUS ADMINISTRATOR  
EDITOR, KASHRUS KURRENTS

The immortal words of Koheles, "*l'kol zman va'eis*" – there is a time and a place for everything – rings true in all of life's twists and turns and is certainly relevant in the world of kosher and kosher standards. Kosher food certification has grown exponentially, and standards have improved with age. Who would have dreamed that *pas Yisroel*, *bishul Yisroel*, and *cholov Yisroel* would be available to the wider kosher marketplace?

Forty years ago, a can of tuna with *bishul Yisroel* and *hashgacha temidis* was a rare commodity. Many a yeshiva would resort to *stam cholov* when *cholov Yisroel* wasn't available, something that would be unheard of half a century later. *Yoshon* was an anomaly, except for the meticulous few; today, *yoshon* is a kosher household term and it continues to proliferate.

These amazing developments across a variety of industries are a testament to the tireless diligence of kosher agencies which strive to provide the kosher consumer with the finest quality kosher products and to uphold the gold standard of *hilchos kashrus*. These efforts to certify many popular consumer items have told the story of the growing success of kosher in this country over the last quarter century. This has held true for many industries – save one.

<sup>1</sup> Belasco, Andrew. "Best Colleges for Jewish Students." College Transitions. September 2, 2022. <https://www.collegetransitions.com/blog/colleges-with-the-best-jewish-life>

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

# Putting the NEW into Shehecheyanu



RABBI CHANANYA JACOBSON  
STAR-K KASHRUS ADMINISTRATOR

**S**hehecheyanu is a bracha that is said on special occasions, which the Gemara defines as something that only “happens from time to time.”<sup>1</sup> We say Shehecheyanu not only on religious occasions, such as the Yamim Tovim, but also to express our appreciation for new experiences and pleasures. Unlike the obligatory Shehecheyanus said on the zmanim and their mitzvos,<sup>2</sup> these brachos are voluntary; perhaps that is why people are not always careful to say them in every situation that would warrant it.<sup>3</sup>

## New Fruit

The *Shulchan Aruch* writes, “One who sees a fruit which grows anew every year says Shehecheyanu, even if he sees it in his friend’s hand, or while still on the tree.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, the primary motivator for the bracha should be the sight of the new fruit. This is indeed how the halacha was originally codified by the Rambam.<sup>5</sup> However, the *Mechaber* concludes, “The custom is to wait to say the blessing until the fruit is eaten.” Why the change? Why wait until it is eaten? One reason given is that many people are much happier to eat the fruit than to just see it, so it is preferable to say Shehecheyanu at the time of greatest joy.<sup>6</sup> Rav Moshe Heinemann *shlita*, STAR-K’s Rabbinic Administrator, has suggested that it is preferable to delay this bracha, since that way the Shehecheyanu will include a longer portion of life and be a vehicle to express even more gratitude.

Since we wait until the fruit is eaten, Shehecheyanu may be said on a fruit that is primarily consumed in a pureed or cooked form, such as rhubarb, even if one never saw the whole fruit, although this is not usually relevant, as such products are generally available year-round.<sup>7</sup>

Shehecheyanu should ideally be said before the bracha on the fruit is made, or after the first taste of fruit. If one says Shehecheyanu between the bracha on the fruit and eating it, it is not considered an interruption.<sup>8</sup>

A separate Shehecheyanu is said for each species of fruit. Two fruits that appear similar but have different names and tastes, such as oranges and tangerines, are considered separate species for this halacha. Two

varieties of the same fruit with different tastes, such as green apples and red apples, may also be considered different species; one who is happy to enjoy the different varieties available may make a bracha on each.<sup>9</sup> If the fruits are eaten at the same time, one Shehecheyanu suffices for all of them, regardless of the species.

Contemporary logistics make it possible for many fruits to be available to the consumer year-round, either fresh or frozen. Since the seasonal cycle is avoided, such fruits are ineligible for Shehecheyanu.<sup>10</sup> Rav Heinemann has said that if a particular fruit has not been available in local stores for at least a month, one may say Shehecheyanu upon its return.

This bracha should be said on any seasonal produce, even if it is a *Borei Pri Ha’adama*, such as pineapple.

Although one need not say Shehecheyanu when he first sees the fruit, and may wait until eating it, if he forgot to say it when eating the fruit for the first time, it should not be said the second time he eats it.<sup>11</sup>

## Fragrances

The great 16th-century Egyptian *posek*, Rabbi David ibn Zimra, was asked why people do not say Shehecheyanu on the scent of seasonal plants, such as roses and jasmine. He responded that, on the contrary, one should say Shehecheyanu, and describes how he himself would do so.<sup>12</sup> Later authorities disagree for a variety of reasons. Some write that pleasure from a fragrance is minimal, and does not warrant a Shehecheyanu.<sup>13</sup> Others give a fascinating reason not to say Shehecheyanu: fragrances give pleasure directly to the *neshama*, which is eternal. Since the *neshama* is not bound to the cycles of life, it is thus inappropriate to say “Shehecheyanu v’kiyimanu” on its pleasures.<sup>14</sup>

## New Clothing

One who acquires new clothing says Shehecheyanu.<sup>15</sup> If the clothing requires tailoring, then the bracha should be said the first time the clothing is worn. If it was not said then, it may be said the second time it is worn, as long as the wearer is still enjoying the newness of the clothing.

1 Eruvin 40b.

2 Refer to *Kashrus Kurrents*, Fall 5783 (Vol. 45 No. 4), *Shehecheyanu: A Timely Blessing*, for a guide to reciting Shehecheyanu on zmanim and mitzvos.

3 Eruvin 40b. Rema 223:1. See also *Magen Avraham* (ad loc., 5) that since these are not recurring events, they do not fit the criterion of *ba’in m’zman l’zman*, cyclically recurring.

4 O.C. 225:3.

5 *Hilchos Berachos* 10, 3. See also Rashi Eruvin 40b s.v. Akra.

6 M.B. 225:11, *Teshuvos Radvaz* 1:297 See also *Aruch Hashulchan* 225, 7.

7 Rav Moshe Heinemann.

8 M.B. *ibid.*

9 M.B. *ibid.*, 14. See, however, *Shaar Hatziyun* 18 that it is preferable to say Shehecheyanu on a new fruit that is unquestionably a separate species, and to include this one in the bracha. It seems that on the second night of Rosh Hashana, one may certainly rely on the opinions that differing tastes require separate brachos.

10 See *Igros Moshe* O.C. vol. 3, 34.

11 M.B. *ibid.*, 13. It seems that as long as one has not finished the fruit, Shehecheyanu may still be said.

12 *Teshuvos Radvaz* 1:297. See *Magen Avraham* 225:12.

13 *Magen Avraham* 216:1 quoting *Lechem Chamudos*.

14 *Elyah Rabbah* 216:2, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 59:18.

15 O.C. 223, 4.

*Shehecheyanu* should only be said on something significant, such as a new suit or sheitel, and not on more mundane items, such as socks or stockings.<sup>16</sup> Since the joy of a purchase is largely subjective, a good rule of thumb is that only items which the buyer is happy to have, but would not buy more than once a year, require *Shehecheyanu*.<sup>17</sup> The clothing need not be brand new, as long as they are new to the wearer, and he or she is happy to have them.

### New Purchases

*Shehecheyanu* (or *Hatov v'Hameitiv*, when others benefit) should be said on other significant purchases – such as a new home or vehicle – as well. When purchasing a new home, the appropriate bracha should be said at closing, since that is when one typically takes legal possession of the new residence. If one does not take possession at the time of closing (due to rent-back agreements or the like) the bracha should be said when one moves in.<sup>18</sup> When renting a new home or leasing a new car, *Shehecheyanu* is not said.

Although, technically, one ought to say *Shehecheyanu* even on smaller purchases – like furniture or tableware – the general custom is not to say *Shehecheyanu* on such items. Nevertheless, if a person is truly happy with the purchase, it is appropriate to express this joy with the bracha of *Shehecheyanu*.<sup>19</sup>

### New Sefarim

Regarding purchasing new *sefarim*, the *Magen Avraham* writes that it is not appropriate to say *Shehecheyanu*, since *mitzvos lav lehanos nitnu* – mitzvos were not given for our benefit.<sup>20</sup>

Rabbi Yaakov Emden makes an impassioned argument that this principle is limited to a legal sense of ownership of the physical pleasure that can accompany mitzvos, but it certainly does not preclude enjoying the mitzvah, for there is no greater intangible pleasure than that which comes from the mitzvos.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps drawing on his career in publishing, he also points out that there is a physical pleasure in a beautifully written and bound *sefer*, which is unrelated to the mitzvah.

The Chayei Adam makes a similar argument, writing that the bracha is on the joy of acquisition and not on the use of the *sefer*.<sup>22</sup>

### Old Friends

In theory, one should say *Shehecheyanu* when seeing a close friend whom they have not seen for thirty days.<sup>23</sup> Practically, modern communication technology has made the requirement for this bracha obsolete, since if one has been in contact with their friends during this time, or has heard that they are well, it should not be said.<sup>24</sup> As such, the general custom is not to say it.<sup>25</sup>

On meeting a friend for the first time, *Shehecheyanu* is not said, even if they have been in correspondence, and consider themselves friends from afar, since a long-distance relationship does not create the same level of closeness as an in-person relationship.<sup>26</sup> If, however, one is

meeting an immediate family member for the first time, such as a newborn daughter, it is appropriate to recite *Shehecheyanu*.<sup>27</sup>

### Birthdays

It would seem appropriate to say *Shehecheyanu* on one's birthday, especially the seventieth, when one reaches the age mentioned in *Tehillim*.<sup>28</sup> We find that the *Chavos Yair* was once asked to define what exactly constitutes a *seudas mitzvah*. In that discussion, he writes, "It is doubtful that a seventieth birthday party should be considered a *seudas mitzvah* even if the celebrant says *Shehecheyanu*, which I believe he should."<sup>29</sup> Since no earlier authority mentions an obligation to say *Shehecheyanu* on the seventieth birthday, it is appropriate to acquire a new fruit or article of clothing to obligate oneself in the bracha on that occasion.<sup>30</sup>

### A Time of Sorrow

It is inappropriate to say "*Shehecheyanu... lazman hazeh*" during the Three Weeks, which are a time of sorrow, although on Shabbos one may say *Shehecheyanu* without compunction.<sup>31</sup>

Since *Shehecheyanu* should not be said, one should refrain from eating new fruits or wearing new clothes during this time. If waiting will cause one to lose the opportunity to say *Shehecheyanu*, such as if the fruit will not be available later, or will cause a mitzvah to be delayed (such as for a *pidyon haben*), one may say *Shehecheyanu* as normal.<sup>32</sup> One who needs to eat a new fruit immediately due to a medical necessity should do so, but without saying *Shehecheyanu*.<sup>33</sup> Although some customs of mourning are in effect during *Sefirah*, *Shehecheyanu* may be recited then as normal.<sup>34</sup>

### Shehecheyanu Sensitivity

There is a startling *Yerushalmi*: "A person will need to give an accounting and justify not eating every food he saw."<sup>35</sup> Considering all Chazal have said about avoiding immersion in the pleasures of this world, one might think that this statement is an outlier, and is not meant to be taken literally.

Nevertheless, the Gemara relates that Rabbi Elazar took this statement very seriously and describes how he put it into practice: "He saved his pennies so that he could eat from every kind of produce once a year." He saw a different message here: one should seek out and pay attention to all the good things Hashem has put in this world, such as the many different types of food available, and use them as an opportunity to praise Him and thank Him,

*Shehecheyanu v'kiyimanu v'higiyanu lazman hazeh!* ☆



16 O.C. 223, 6.

17 Rav Moshe Heinemann.

18 Rav Moshe Heinemann, based on O.C. 223:3. See *M.B.* 12 regarding renovations.

19 Rav Moshe Heinemann.

20 223:5.

21 *Mor U'ketziah* 223.

22 62:5.

23 O.C. 225:1. If a year has passed, he should instead say *Mechaye Meisim*.

24 *M.B.* 225:2. See *Shaar Hatziyun* 3 regarding a friend who has fallen ill.

25 See *Aruch Hashulchan* 225:3. Rav Heinemann explains: Since *Shehecheyanu* is only said upon seeing close friends, people may feel slighted when they realize that it is not said upon seeing them. To avoid giving offense, the custom developed to never say this *Shehecheyanu*.

26 O.C. 225:2 and *M.B.* 5. This author is unsure if a Zoom meeting is sufficient to create the necessary level of friendship.

27 The *Mishnah Berura* 223:2 writes that one should say *Shehecheyanu* upon seeing a newborn daughter for the first time, since it is certainly as joyous as seeing an old friend. It seems that familial feelings override the lack of familiarity.

28 90:10: "The days of our lives are seventy years, and with strength, eighty years."

29 *Chavos Yair* 70.

30 Rav Moshe Heinemann. See *Kaf Hachaim* 223:28, and *ibid.*, 29 regarding the sixtieth birthday. See also *Ginzei Yosef* 4 that it is appropriate to do so on every birthday.

31 O.C. 551:17 and *M.B.* 98. See *Shaar Hatziyun* 99 regarding Rosh Chodesh.

32 O.C. *ibid.* See *Igros Moshe* O.C. 3:80 regarding the purchase of new vehicles and other items which require *Shehecheyanu* during the Three Weeks.

33 *M.B.* 551:99.

34 *M.B.* 493:2.

35 *Kiddushin* 4:12.

# STAR-K GOES TO

# COLLEGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## **KK: Have things changed much since you began certifying college campus facilities almost 25 years ago?**

RMK: When we first started certifying college campuses, kosher was a self-contained program, with a separate kitchen area and a dedicated dining room. Students had to be on the kosher food plan and were charged more to be on it. That has become obsolete.

The new style is preferred by the students, since they don't want an isolated kosher dining experience. They want to sit with their friends who may be non-Jewish and/or not interested in eating kosher food.

Today, kosher is served at one or two stations – depending if it serves both meat and dairy, such as in our Muhlenberg and Franklin & Marshall programs. The set-up is like a food court at a mall, where anyone can come up and pick up food; it is all-you-can-eat for one flat fee. We provide red and blue paper mats to differentiate between those eating meat and dairy or eating kosher and non-kosher at the same table.

## **KK: Are there any other restrictions necessary in such a dining setting?**

RMK: Yes, since people are walking around with non-kosher food from the adjacent non-kosher food stations, extra restrictions are put in place. Diners cannot approach the counter with anything non-kosher. If they do, they will be politely asked to place it on a dedicated table before they approach the counter. In addition, they get served on disposables and get new disposables every time they come back for more food.

True self-serve is only available in the colleges that still use the original self-contained kosher program – such as at Yale University's Slifka Center and at Cornell's primary kosher dining hall, 104 West. But Cornell's newer satellite station, Kosher Dining (located in Toni Morrison Dining Hall) is using the food court model.

## **KK: Are there any other kashrus challenges in the food court model?**

RMK: Yes, you must have a logistical set-up which takes into consideration where to store the food. Since space in our station is at a premium, we dedicate it to kosher-specific ingredients and foods, such as bulk meats, poultry, fish, and cheese, for which we have our own designated storage and refrigeration areas. Kosher certified ingredients, such as condiments and oils that are used by the entire dining program, are kept in a general storage area.

Other challenges include how you deal within a non-isolated, non-kosher food court environment and how you deal with platforms that provide both dairy and meat. For example, if the location has a dedicated pareve prep area which services both the dairy and meat operations, how do you service these separate food genders? One can't take the pareve *keilim* and bring them to the meat or dairy areas, or bring the meat or dairy *keilim* into the pareve area. The challenge is how to preserve each gender's integrity.

You also must figure out how to move kosher food through a mostly non-kosher area within the food court setup. And, since every college setting is different, I must set up a specific logistical system custom-tailored to each location, taking into consideration where the kosher counter in the food court is located. Is it on the same floor? In the basement?

## **KK: Do Shabbos and the Yamim Tovim present additional challenges?**

RMK: Not every college has Shabbos and Yom Tov programs, but for those that do, yes, certain issues must be addressed.

On a Shabbos, all the rules that apply for a shul bar mitzvah, for example, apply to the Shabbos program on campus, with one major difference – how to figure out payment. Since the kosher food is available to both Jews and gentiles, you need to come up with a method by which they can get their meal without having to pay. You can't have a customer carry money or swipe a credit card.

Another potential challenge is providing a viable entrance option for the mashgiach and students so they can get into the kosher dining facility without having to violate Shabbos.

Similarly, and at times overlooked, is to offer bathroom facilities that do not operate solely with electronic flush or have motion sensor lighting. And, if the mashgiach or mashgicha must stay on campus over Shabbos, the accommodations must be Shabbos-compliant and within reasonable walking distance of the kosher dining facility.

## **KK: Are there special challenges to running a Pesach program?**

RMK: Pesach programs are particularly challenging. Both Yale and Cornell, for example, in addition to offering Pesach programs, offer *sedarim*. Up to five hundred people can take part in Cornell's first-night Pesach *seder*.

Since 104 West cannot accommodate that many diners, the Pesach program has to go to another, larger platform – one of Cornell's food courts, Trillium, which is not kosher. First, we block off all the non-kosher food stations with pipe and drape. All the space that we would be using, such as the dining room, food display areas, etc., has to be thoroughly cleaned for chometz and covered.



# AN INTERVIEW WITH RABBI MAYER KURCFELD

As caterers do at an off-site event, we have to first figure out a system of traveling the food there and set up hotboxes and a staging area from which to serve the food. It's basically like setting up a one-night military operation! The second *seder*, attended by fewer diners, takes place back at 104 West.

## **KK: Is it difficult to find mashgichim to oversee the kashrus on campus?**

RMK: Finding competent mashgichim to work on a college campus is a major challenge because they are often in isolated locations. Sometimes, a campus mashgiach job can be an 80-hour-per week job and it must be split between two mashgichim. If you want a mashgiach for a kosher program out in a far-flung place, you have to offer decent pay. They may have to move there, rather than commute. I try to get a husband-and-wife team, especially in a remote place; this way, if one of them needs to take off, there is an easily accessible substitute.

## **KK: With anti-Semitism rampant on college campuses today, does providing a kosher platform on campus provide additional challenges?**

RMK: Overall, I have never had any substantial issues. But now that we instituted a partnership with halal through the Etimad certification agency on some of our campuses – such as at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida – it has been very helpful. It sends a message that the Jewish and Muslim student communities can work together.

## **KK: Thank you for this enlightening interview, Rabbi Kurcfield. It's amazing how you have kept up with the challenges of the college campus food service industry – kashrus and otherwise – through these changing times.**

RMK: Thank you! I understand the dynamic of the kosher kitchen on campus, and I always assure our potential clients that we always try to find an amicable solution when problems arise. Administrating kashrus with a solution-oriented attitude and mutual respect strengthens kashrus both in the long and short run. ☆

### **JOB OPPORTUNITY**

STAR-K has **open mashgiach positions** at our certified colleges/universities. Applicants must be detail-oriented, self-motivated team players, with a positive attitude and excellent communication and critical thinking skills, who can assist and guide staff in the proper implementation of STAR-K policies and procedures. Starting salary is \$60,000 plus benefits. Excellent opportunity for a married couple to share responsibilities. **Contact Rabbi Mayer Kurcfield at [rabbikurcfield@star-k.org](mailto:rabbikurcfield@star-k.org).**

# Mashke Goes Mainstream



**RABBI ZVI HOLLAND**  
STAR-K KASHRUS ADMINISTRATOR

In the last year, STAR-K certified a host of iconic brands in the alcoholic beverages category from almost all the way around the globe: from the green pastures of Kentucky, to the shores of Baltimore's Inner Harbor; crossing the Atlantic Ocean to the Emerald Isle, Ireland; and completing the journey in Italy. These newly kosher-certified brands include selected products from Baltimore's own Sagamore spirits; Wild Turkey and Skyy Vodka; Bailey's Irish Cream Original (STAR-D Dairy, non-Cholov Yisroel); and Frangelico, all of whom have joined the STAR-K Family just this year.

Kosher certification for spirits addresses a number of serious issues that have cropped up, as the industry has globalized and consolidated operations. Growing use of additives and processing aids that need certification – such as flavor chemicals, glycerin, and the use of shared transportation bottling lines with dairy and non-kosher products – makes kosher certification more and more relevant, even in product categories that once were less problematic. In addition, the increasingly common practice of first-fill aging of whiskey in former wine and cognac barrels further complicates an already challenging matter.

The craft distilling and brewing industry presents an exciting twist on a product category that was once simple from a kosher perspective, but now presents new challenges that stem directly from these new trends. The addition of juices, vegetables, flavors – even seafood and bacon! – creates all kinds of havoc for the kosher consumer, who at one time could treat a simple beer or whiskey as kosher as a bottle of water.

As the production of spirits and cordials gets more complex, consumer demand for kosher certification on alcoholic beverages grows every day. No longer are consumer and kosher agencies satisfied with lists and hearsay; they want the confidence of a kosher certificate and kosher symbol before choosing their drinks of choice. In the cordials area, which has always required certification, the growing demand from kosher consumers has been noticed by major companies; they have reacted by seeking out kosher certification, so their products can grace the tables of kosher homes and at kosher-certified establishments and events.

In addition, Israeli food labeling regulations have also created a demand for kosher certification to allow companies to expand their export business to Israel, a market with growing demand for the world's finest brands. STAR-K Israel, led by Rabbi Aharon Haskel, has been instrumental in helping kosher consumers worldwide get access to an ever-increasing number of kosher-certified alcoholic beverages, including Glenmorangie, Johnny Walker, Smirnoff and Tanqueray, all of which bear a STAR-K symbol when distributed in Israel. ☆

Here is a partial list of newly STAR-K certified major brands.\*

#### **Spirits**

Casamigos Tequila  
Don Julio Tequila  
Sagamore Spirits  
SKYY Vodka and Infusions  
Tres Mujeres Tequil  
Tequila Volcan de Mi Tierra Tequila  
Wild Turkey (American Whiskey,  
Bourbon, Rye)

#### **Cordials**

Bailey's Irish Cream Original (STAR-D  
Dairy, Non-Cholov Yisroel)  
Frangelico Liqueur  
Pallini Limoncello Liqueur

\*Go to [star-k.org/all\\_liquor\\_list](http://star-k.org/all_liquor_list)  
for exact products and conditions.

# Who Has Whom... Over the Barrel?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



There yet remains one industry that for decades has been shrouded in mystery and has refused to strip away her opaque shrouds. This is an industry that appeals to young and old alike. If you haven't guessed it: it is the world of liquor.

The world of liquor production is truly a global phenomenon. It has been around since Noah planted the *kerem*. It is a subject that is dealt with extensively in the *Gemara*, *Halacha*, and *poskim*. And it has been one of the least transparent products in the marketplace. To this day, you won't see an ingredient declaration on a bottle of booze.

While for decades, the industry followed manufacturing protocols and BATF<sup>1</sup> regulations, *kashrus* was not privy to any industry information, nor did it make any significant inroads into the confidence of the brew masters and master blenders of mystery. *Kashrus*-wise, this was unacceptable.

Approximately a quarter of a century ago, STAR-K began researching the *kashrus* of beer and liquor in earnest. The internet, the exciting new "information highway," was then in its infancy, so information had to be culled the old-fashioned way, through faxes and phone calls, and good old-fashioned gumshoeing, to find out whom to contact to help us ferret fact from fiction. It was a painstaking but sometimes fun process, and over time great friendships were cultivated. Through dogged persistence, we found ourselves making headway and – to borrow a well-known beer term – slowly things were becoming clarified.

STAR-K, as a *kashrus* agency committed to kosher consumer education, felt a responsibility to create a pair of lists, one of certified-kosher liquors and liqueurs, and a separate one of "acceptable" products – ones that were determined to be free of *kashrus* concerns due to their strict manufacturing and regulatory protocols. Over time, different agencies created their own lists, and each based their "acceptable" list using their own yardstick – what was acceptable to one agency might be unacceptable to another.

Then two phenomena emerged:

Whereas a kosher consumer would *never* think of purchasing a soft drink or flavored seltzer without a reliable kosher certification, we noted this did not hold true when it came to liquor; there we found an element of indiscriminate

drinking by most, with a heavy reliance on the "acceptable" lists. These lists were created by agencies solely on the basis of a "reasonable assumption," in sharp contrast to the rigor applied, for example, by STAR-K to certify a flavored hazelnut K-cup.

With the growing awareness by many breweries and distilleries about the accelerating consumer demand for kosher alcoholic beverages, the manufacturers began voluntarily opening their portals and seeking reliable kosher certification on their own. Score another win in the kosher certification column!

As a result of the steady increase in kosher-certified beers, whiskies, liquors, and liqueurs, the discriminating kosher consumer can now select from a wide range of high quality alcoholic beverages with reliable kosher certification. The question *du jour* is how to encourage, inspire and convince a generation of consumers who have long relied on "approved lists" to change course and take the certified route, to move from "*bedi'eved*" to "*l'chatchila*." Indeed, the task is challenging, and it won't happen overnight.

To make a significant change in the kosher consumer's way of thinking – or in this case, their way of drinking – *kashrus* agencies should continue in their quest to certify quality liquors. As more and more high-end bourbons, scotches and tequilas elect to become kosher-certified, and the liquor market becomes saturated with certified kosher spirits, *kashrus* agencies are better able to suggest viable options to their kosher consumers, and not "compromise" options.

It is a fact that kosher consumers would not consider drinking flavored beers without reliable *hashgacha*. This is true of liqueurs, cognacs, and vermouth as well, all of which require reliable kosher certification. STAR-K now certifies many premium kosher flavored beers, seltzers, teas, and ciders, including Samuel Adams Truly, Twisted Tea, and Angry Orchard. These days, there are barrelfuls of kosher-certified product on the market to choose from. No one need miss Remy Martin or Courvoisier.

It is still a process to reach the next *madreiga*. Decades earlier, before Mr. Joseph Rosenberger, *zt"l*, educated an entire world about the mitzvah of *shatnez*, people who were aware of the mitzvah would crush suit collars to see if the stiffening was soft. Most of American Jewry outside of Brooklyn didn't even know there was such a mitzvah. Today, who won't check a garment to see that it is *shatnez*-free? It was an evolving process and the process succeeded.

Elevating our *ruchniyus* by choosing only kosher-certified product is today's challenge for the kosher liquor consumer. Unquestionably, it is hard to change a mindset from years of relying on "acceptable lists" to abiding only by strictly certified ones. But *kashrus* agencies have spent decades taking the kosher alcoholic beverage consumer from the unknown to the known, and now, more and more companies are moving to become kosher certified.

With so much movement afoot, I am certain that the next phase is to progress from "acceptable" to "certified." This is our generation's *shatnez* moment. Will we get there?

Time will tell. *Ya'aseh hazman ma shelo ya'aseh haseichel* – time accomplishes what the mind cannot. ☆

**STAR-K reminds readers of the importance of consuming alcohol responsibly and in a "kosher" manner.**

1 Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms





# NEW UNDER STAR-K

## CONSUMER PRODUCTS

### ADUSA DISTRIBUTION

Salisbury, NC  
FRESH VEGETABLES

### AGREXPO SA

Greece  
DRIED FRUIT, OLIVE OIL

### BACKYARD FARMS

Jackson, NJ  
GLUTEN FREE PRODUCTS

### BJ'S WHOLESALE CLUB

Westborough, MA  
COCONUT PRODUCTS

### BKG COFFEE ROASTERS

New York, NY  
COFFEES

### CENTO FINE FOODS

West Deptford, NJ  
CANNED VEGETABLES

### COMERCIAL DE AGUACATE

Guatemala  
SPREADS

### EVOLVE FOODS

Holden, MA  
PRETZELS

### GEORGE DELALLO COMPANY

Mount Pleasant, PA  
CANNED VEGETABLES

### GLAMOUR COOKIES

Spring Valley, NY  
SPECIALTY COOKIES

### GLOBAL FOOD COMPANY

Medley, FL  
CANNED FRUIT

### GREENHOUSE FOODS

Venice, CA  
GLUTEN-FREE PRODUCTS

### HELLA PHAT VEGAN

Walnut Creek, CA  
SPICES & SEASONINGS

### IMPERIAL DADE CANADA

Canada  
PAN LINERS

### INGLES MARKETS

Asheville, NC  
CANNED FRUIT

### MELISSA'S

Vernon, CA  
FRESH VEGETABLES

### MONACO FOODS

Miami, FL  
CANNED FRUIT

### NATIONAL HARVEST

Great Neck, NY  
DEHYDRATED FRUIT

### NORTHERN FOOD

Westbury, NY  
HONEY

### ONE MIGHTY MILL

Lynn, MA  
BREAD PRODUCTS

### PERFORMANCE FOODSERVICE

Richmond, VA  
PICKLED PRODUCTS

### PHOENICIA GROUP

Canada  
DRIED FRUIT

### PREPOSTEROUS PROVISIONS

Austin, TX  
CEREAL PRODUCTS

### PUBLIX SUPERMARKETS

Lakeland, FL  
FRESH PACKAGED SALADS

### RON SON FOODS

Swedesboro, NJ  
OLIVES

### ROUSES SUPERMARKET

Thibodaux, LA  
SPICES & SEASONINGS

### SAMROIYOD CORPORATION

Thailand  
CANNED FRUIT

### SOCIETE DE VALORISATION DES DATTES DE TUNISIE

Tunisia  
DRIED FRUIT

### SPROUTS FARMERS MARKET

Phoenix, AZ  
QUINOA, RICE

### THE SAVE MART COMPANIES

Pleasanton, CA  
FRESH PACKAGED FRUIT

### TM DISTILLERY

Mexico  
ALCOHOL PRODUCTS

### TRADER JOE'S

Monrovia, CA  
SPICES & SEASONINGS

### UNIVERSAL COFFEE

Brooklyn, NY  
CANNED FRUIT

### UPPER TRADE IMPORTACAO E EXPORTACAO

Brazil  
OLIVE OIL

### US FOODS

Rosemont, IL  
PICKLED PRODUCTS

### VOSS PRODUCTION AMERICAS

New York, NY  
WATER



## NEW UNDER STAR-D

## CONSUMER PRODUCTS

### CT LIGHTS

Hoboken, NJ  
BEVERAGES & DRINK MIXES

### JOY BAKING GROUP

Le Mars, IA  
ICE CREAM CONES

### PELINDABA LAVENDER

Friday Harbor, WA  
CHOCOLATE PRODUCTS

### RITA'S

Miami Beach, FL  
ICE CREAM SHOP

## INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS

### AVA CHEMICALS

India  
PRESERVATIVES

### AVENRO

Sri Lanka  
PICKLED PRODUCTS

### DAWTONA

Poland  
BEANS, CANNED VEGETABLES

### END-OF-EARTH LOESS ECO-FRIENDLY AGRICULTURAL

South Korea  
RICE PRODUCTS

### HAFSA FRANCE - SOFRA

France  
LUBRICANTS

### HUZHOU CITY LINGHU XINWANG CHEMICAL

China  
CELLULOSE PRODUCTS

### INDUSTRIAL ENVASADORA DE LACTEOS Y DERIVADOS

Mexico  
VEGETABLE SEED OILS

### MILAD MASOUD ARVAND

Iran  
DRIED FRUIT

### MOJTABA BONAB

Iran  
DRIED FRUIT

### OLIN

Clayton, MO  
INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS

### PT ROTE KARAGINAN NUSANTARA

Indonesia  
FOOD GUM

### QINGDAO JINSHENG HONGDA FOOD

China  
DEHYDRATED VEGETABLES

### SARL AGRODAT

Algeria  
DRIED FRUIT

### SAVI ITALO

Italy  
FLOURS, SEEDS, OILS

### SENA MILLS REFINERIES

Sri Lanka  
COCONUT OILS

### SHRI AHIMSA MINES AND MINERALS

India  
COFFEES

### SUNWAY LAB

India  
CITRIC ACID/CITRATES, PHOSPHATES

### SUPHERB FARMS

Turlock, CA  
FROZEN VEGETABLES

### TERVIVA

Alameda, CA  
VEGETABLE/SEED OILS

### THENNAKON OIL MILLS

Sri Lanka  
COCONUT OILS

### TROPICAL HEALTH FOOD

Sri Lanka  
CANNED & DEHYDRATED FRUIT

### VEZBYNATURE PRODUCTS

India  
FRUIT BLENDS/PUREES

### WONDERBAKE

Philippines  
BAKERY SUPPLIES

### XUCHANG HUABAO FLAVOR AND FRAGRANCE

China  
FLAVOR CHEMICALS

### ZHANGZHOU FUYOU FOOD

China  
FROZEN FRUIT

### ZHANGZHOU ZHAOLONG FOOD

China  
CANNED FRUITS & VEGETABLES

### ZHEJIANG TIAN TONG FOOD

China  
CANNED FRUIT

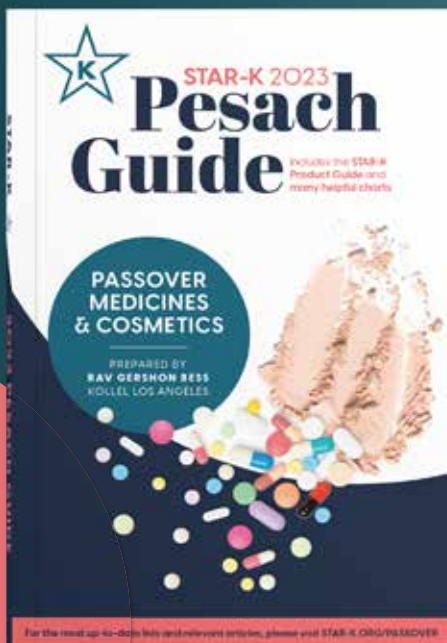
STAR-K CERTIFICATION, INC.  
122 Slade Avenue, Suite 300  
Baltimore, Maryland 21208-4996

NON PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
BROOKLYN, NY  
PERMIT #7379

## The STAR-K 2023 Pesach Guide

Including halachos and  
many helpful charts

Now available at  
Amazon.com and  
Jewish bookstores  
near you!



## STAR-K SUMMER 2023 TRAINING SEMINARS

This summer, once again, STAR-K will be offering the following popular training seminars at its Baltimore corporate headquarters:

**July 10-12, 2023**

### 10th Annual Foodservice Mashgiach Training Seminar

An intensive three-day training program for people currently involved – or who wish to become involved – in hashgacha in restaurants, catering halls, hotels, and the like.

**July 17-20, 2023**

### 20th Annual Kashrus Training Program

This four-day program provides *rabbonim*, certifying agency administrators, *kollel* members, and others serving in *klei kodesh*, the opportunity to meet the personalities behind the internationally recognized and trusted STAR-K symbol, and to benefit from their expertise.

**SIGN  
UP  
NOW!**

For more information, contact Rabbi Zvi Goldberg,  
STAR-K's seminar coordinator, at 410-484-4110 ext. 219.

Early registration is advised as each program is limited to 25 attendees and spaces fill up early.  
To download an application for either seminar, please go to [star-k.org/training](http://star-k.org/training).

## STAR-K KOSHER CERTIFICATION

A non-profit agency representing the kosher consumer in promoting kashrus through education, research and supervision

FOUNDING EDITOR

**A.J. Levin**

EDITOR

**Rabbi Tzvi Rosen**

MANAGING EDITOR

**Mrs. Pesi Herskovitz**

COPY EDITOR/  
CREATIVE DIRECTOR:

**Ms. Adina Michelsohn**

DESIGN  
**AMF Creative**

Phone: 410.484.4110 | Fax: 410.653.9294 | [info@star-k.org](mailto:info@star-k.org) | [www.star-k.org](http://www.star-k.org)

Download our STAR-K app on your Android and Apple Smartphones.  
Available on the App Store and Google Play.

Receive late breaking kashrus news and alerts in your email.  
Send an email to [alerts-subscribe@star-k.org](mailto:alerts-subscribe@star-k.org) or visit [www.star-k.org/alerts](http://www.star-k.org/alerts)

This publication is dedicated to the memory of  
**Mr. and Mrs. M. Leo Storch**  
of blessed memory, through a grant from the Storch Family.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

**\$10 (USD)** annually for 4 issues - USA & Canada

**\$15 (USD)** annually for 4 issues - Overseas

is also available online at  
[www.star-k.org/kashrus-kurrents](http://www.star-k.org/kashrus-kurrents).

To receive an email when the most recent issue has been uploaded,  
please send your request to [kashruskurrents-subscribe@star-k.org](mailto:kashruskurrents-subscribe@star-k.org).  
(The STAR-K Passover Guide is not included in your subscription.  
It is available for purchase in Jewish bookstores after Purim.)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your tax deductible checks made payable to:

**KASHRUS KURRENTS**  
c/o STAR-K Certification, Inc  
122 Slade Avenue, Suite 300  
Baltimore, MD 21208-4996