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RICE

NATURE'S ANSWER TO HASHEM'S BLESSINGS



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It has been touted as nature's most versatile food. There is no single grain that feeds more people around the globe and, because it is free of gluten and allergens, can be tolerated by most everyone. It is the most widely consumed staple for over half of the world's human population.¹

When the Gemara in *Brachos* discusses the *brachos* that are made before and after eating this versatile grain, the mnemonic used to remember the *poskim's* conclusion is אמר: *Orez, Mezonos, Nefashos*. The grain we are discussing is *Oryza sativa*, which the Gemara refers to as *orez*.² We know it, simply, as *rice*.

There are over 7,000 varieties of rice grown worldwide. Rice is mostly consumed in the Asian regions from Japan in the east to Pakistan in the west and, after sugarcane and maize, is the third most produced agricultural crop in the world.³ China and India account for more than half of the rice produced globally. By the end of 2022, it is estimated that about 515 million tons of

rice will have been produced worldwide.⁴ The global rice market had an estimated value of USD 247.2 billion in 2020, and with surging demand, that number is projected to increase to USD 274 billion by the end of 2027.⁵

A Brief History

Historians concur that rice was known and grown in the Far East thousands of years before Alexander the Great, who lived during the time of the second Beis Hamikdash. Alexander discovered rice during his invasion of Asia Minor. Subsequently, rice was brought to Spain by the Moors in the 700s C.E. It was the Spaniards who introduced rice to Italy in the 1400s, and to the West Indies and South America in the 1600s.

Although rice is grown in many U.S. states (including Arkansas, Texas and California), Crowley, Louisiana, ranks as America's rice capital.

1 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rice>.

2 *Tosfos – Brachos 37A, D"H Rashi*.

3 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rice>.

4 <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/rice-production-by-country>.

5 <https://www.globenewswire.com/en/news-release/2021/01/26/2164005/28124/en/Global-Rice-Market-Report-2021-A-274-Billion-Opportunity-by-the-End-of-the-Year-2027.html>.

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WANTING THE BEST FOR OUR CHILDREN: MEETING KASHRUS CHALLENGES IN YESHIVA, CAMP AND DAY SCHOOL KITCHENS



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Kashrus has come a long way over the past fifty years. Agencies ensure the highest standards of kashrus in factories and food establishments worldwide, with experts in *balacha*, food technology, equipment, and ingredients. Consumers have been trained to know which products are acceptable and how to maintain a kosher kitchen *l'mehadrin*.

However, one area of kashrus that has received far less attention – even throughout the past several decades of unprecedented kashrus growth – is kashrus in our schools. This is due to several inaccurate reasons, including the following:

Myth #1: "Religious teachers are in the building all day and they oversee kashrus and everyone is careful."

Realistically, this is not the case. Unless a teacher is told to "be on top" of the situation, only minimal oversight will typically occur. Unfortunately, not everyone is familiar with the intricacies of kashrus, and without guidelines a lot can go wrong.

Myth #2: "Unlike a for-profit eating establishment, which obviously needs oversight to prevent questionable cost cutting measures, in a non-profit school nothing will go wrong."

Most problems in eating establishments are due to human error and carelessness. This can easily happen in a school with everyone busy with

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their primary job of teaching the children. Furthermore, schools often run on tight budgets and in an effort to save money a kashrus issue might get overlooked.

Myth #3: “Schools are busy dealing with so many other student-related issues. There is no time to enforce kashrus standards, and we also don’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings.”

Using the “fifth *cheilek* of *Shulchan Aruch*” (i.e., *seichel*), guidelines can be implemented with the help of others, who can make the time and assess the situation without hurting anyone’s feelings. If and when sensitivities become an issue, a *shaila* should be asked. It is not enough of a reason simply “to look the other way *l’maan hashalom*”.

Yeshivos, camps, and schools, where tens of thousands of our *tinokos shel beis rabban* spend their formative years, deserve the same attention as factories, restaurants, and our homes. The new food trends that have been embraced by society at large have led to a similar preoccupation with food served and consumed in schools, making this issue all that more critical.

It is difficult to address the needs of each school, as each situation is different. The issues at a yeshiva or camp with a full-service kitchen, open seven days a week, are different than those of an elementary school that has a small kitchen. A yeshiva in Lakewood will have different challenges than a day school in the Midwest. The purpose of this article is to address issues that may apply to an array of schools.

1. **Kosher Policy.** Every school should adopt policies and create clear kashrus guidelines on par with at least the regularly accepted policies of the local *vaad hakashrus* or local rabbinic authority. Furthermore, it is important to consult with these authorities when developing a school’s kosher policy. The policies should be documented and distributed to the entire staff and to parents and students as well. They must be periodically reviewed and updated. New staff should become familiar with these guidelines.

2. **Who’s In Charge?** If there is an active school kitchen, someone familiar with all school policies should be trained. That individual must be up to date with the kashrus industry to know what is acceptable; be appointed with the approval of the administration, *vaad hachinuch* and school board; and maintain the support of local *rabbonim* and/or kashrus personnel to whom he can go with *shailos* (e.g., “kitchen” mix-up or whether a certain *hechsher* is acceptable). To help ensure that someone devotes the necessary time, consider offering a rebbe or someone else in the school a financial incentive for this extra responsibility.

3. **What to Focus On.** Schools that have an active school kitchen should address most kashrus issues that arise at eating establishments. This is true not only in yeshiva kitchens that cook three meals a day, but also in schools where the kitchen is used periodically. Yeshivos and camps should consider having their kitchens reviewed by a kashrus professional (or even consider obtaining a *hechsher*) to ensure they have proper standards.

The following is a partial checklist of issues:

- What is the system for **segregating meat, pareve and dairy**? Fish and meat? When relevant, are utensils clearly marked and properly stored (i.e., no dairy utensils or foods are exposed when meat is being processed)?
- Are **bishul akum** issues addressed? If the cook is not Jewish, who is turning on the flames? Who is present if the flame is extinguished and needs to be re-lit by an *erlich Yid* to insure it is *bishul Yisroel*?
- If **leafy vegetables** or fruit at risk for infestation (e.g., lettuce or strawberries) are served, who is ensuring that all the many *tolaim* issues have been addressed? Is the one conducting *bedikas tolaim* properly trained?
- When cooking is being done, is there a trained **mashgiach** on premises? Is the mashgiach present for enough time? At the very least, are the standards of this ‘commercial kitchen’ acceptable to the local *vaad hakashrus* or local rabbinic authority?
- Is there an overall system of oversight and accountability for all **kitchen personnel**?
- Who has **keys** or access to the kitchen?





- **Who can bring in food?** Can a non-Jewish or non-*shomer Shabbos* teacher cook in the kitchen? Are all the Jewish teachers trained in the *halachos* of kashrus, and can they be relied upon?
- Do parents and students **who cook in the kitchen** (e.g., *Chanukah* and graduation dinners, G.O. and student council events, Ladies Auxiliary luncheons, Shabbatons in school, etc.) know the school's policies? Is someone overseeing their activities?
- Federal and state **lunch programs** in Jewish schools require kashrus protocols. If the food is produced on-site, the school kitchen should have proper kashrus standards, as it is now a miniature catering hall. If food is delivered from a local kosher-certified restaurant or caterer (i.e., contracted out), it is critical that a proper system is set up once the food leaves the production facility (e.g., who makes the delivery? is it properly sealed? who oversees the food when it comes to the school? etc.). Every step of the system in place should be reviewed by a kashrus professional.
- Is there a clear list of acceptable **hechsherim**? A list of kosher-approved **beverages**? Is anyone confirming that prohibited **medications** (e.g., chewable pain reliever that contains gelatin) are not being dispensed by the school nurse?
- Someone must check all incoming items to ensure the approved *hechsher* is on the **label**, and that all necessary **seals** are on the incoming products. For example, meat and poultry products require two seals. Seals sometimes break in transport, and in such cases the certifying agency may not take responsibility. It is critical that all seals are intact and that labels are checked when deliveries arrive.
- When necessary, who is **toveling** the *keilim*? Do they know the *halachos*?
- Who determines if a vessel has become *treif* and, if they are considered *treif*, who is **kashering** these *keilim*, or disposing of them if they are not kasherable?
- Have workers been given proper guidelines? What controls are in place? Who is authorized to use the microwave and toaster ovens? What controls are in place to ensure that no one heats meat in a dairy microwave or pareve toaster oven (and vice versa)? Do the **cleaning crew** or other maintenance staff have access to these appliances at night, when no one is around to see what they might heat?
- Is **hafrashas challah** done properly and when necessary?
- Is there a known policy regarding **cholov Yisroel, pas Yisroel and Yoshon**? Are the kashrus needs of **Sephardim** being addressed (e.g., stricter *bishul akum* standards)?
- Is someone checking for products coming from **Eretz Yisroel**? Is someone knowledgeable in the *halachos* regarding *terumos*, *maasros*, and *shemita* for produce coming from Eretz Yisroel?
- **Trips**: Where will food be purchased along the way? Who is responsible for all aspects of kashrus during the trip (e.g., ensuring out-of-town food establishments are approved)?
- **Shabbos, Yom Tov and catered events** in the school (e.g., weddings) are beyond the scope of this article. When relevant, special preparations must be made.

- **Yeshiva and camp kitchens** that serve three meals a day must have a system of *hashgacha*. Such an operation should be viewed like a food establishment with all the necessary guidelines. This, unfortunately, is not always the case and requires much attention and *tikkun* beyond the scope of our discussion.

4. **Food Brought to Class and School.** Every school should develop policies that address the following:

- Can children bring **homemade** items to class or school events (e.g., a *siyum*)? Who is checking over the packaged items they bring in to ensure a proper *hechsher* and that no mix-ups (e.g., milk and meat) develop? Do the students know which *hechsherim* are acceptable?
- Can **teachers bring homemade** items? If yes, who is ensuring that they are knowledgeable in *bedikas tolaim*, *hafrashas challah*, and *terumos* and *maasros* (very relevant *halachos* to homemade items)?
- Can a **non-shomer Shabbos** individual bake with her students? If yes, who oversees turning on the flames?
- **Meat and dairy meals** brought to school should be properly segregated. Lunchroom monitors should know which tablecloths are meant for meat and dairy, and at which tables children who bring dairy should eat on 'fleishig day,' and vice versa.
- A complicated issue is the items children bring in their own lunchboxes. It is common for classmates to **trade or share items**. What controls are in place to ensure that a child from a home with a higher standard of kashrus for the entire family is not trading food with a child whose family does not have the same set of standards? This can be especially relevant in day schools where children come from homes that at the present time do not keep kosher.

5. **Training Our Children.** It is vital that children are trained in kashrus issues. Time should be devoted to teaching them basic aspects of kashrus, including separation of milk and meat and restrictions regarding heating food. They should understand practical applications of *tevilas keilim*, *hafrashas challah*, and which *hechsherim* are acceptable. Age-appropriate lessons should be part of the curriculum.

Children should also know when to ask a *shaila* and how to inquire about *hechsherim* that they do not recognize. *Yeshivos* should teach *bochurim* this information before Purim, when they will buy products for *mishloach manos*. For some *bochurim*, it is their only trip to the supermarket all year! The same is true with children who stock up on *nosh* before class trips. They need to know what items are appropriate to purchase. *Bochurim* and seminary students going to Israel should familiarize themselves with the Israeli *hechsherim* and the guidelines for *mitzvos batluyos ba'aretz* (*terumos*, *maasros* and *shemita*, etc.).

The *neshamos* of our children are precious. Poor kashrus controls can *chas v'sholom* lead to mistakes, *devarim ha'asurim* (forbidden products) and *timtum halev*. Therefore, it is our responsibility to ensure that our schools maintain the highest standards of kashrus so that the environment in which our children learn remains *kadosh v'tabor*. ☆

RICE

NATURE'S ANSWER TO HASHEM'S BLESSINGS

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Basic Rice Facts

Rice is a cereal grain and is related to the *chamisha minei dagan* (i.e., wheat, barley, rye, oats and spelt), all of which are considered to be main staples in the food pyramid.⁶ While *halachic* literature refers to these cereal grains as being 'maizin,' – a basic staple of sustenance (*mazon*) – the different types have fundamental differences.

The main cereal grains are distinguished from rice both by their ability to rise and produce breads and cakes, and by their vastly different growing environments. Rice, lacking gluten, can't rise; and only rice grows in paddies and climates that are not conducive for growing the other cereal grains.

What follows is a brief discussion of a rice kernel's intriguing journey from planting to harvesting, and from processing to production. We will also address some of the *halachic* issues and ramifications concerning rice manufacturing along its route from plant to plate.

Rice grows in warm climates and requires a constant supply of water. A rice plant will grow to a height of two to six feet, at which point the grain develops from *spikelets*, the flowers on the head of the plant. The rice grain, known as *rough rice*, is comprised of an outer husk called the *hull*. The hull covers seven layers of *bran* that lie directly beneath it, which in turn cover the *endosperm*, otherwise known as the *kernel*.

Milling: The Cleaning Process

When the rough rice comes to the mill, the kernel is dried and left intact, with the hull in place. If the hull is removed but the bran layers remain, we get *brown rice*. Brown rice is a more nutritious form of rice because the vitamins and nutrients are contained in the bran layer. Once the bran layers are removed, through a process called *pearling*, the nutrients are also removed, and we get *white rice*.

Another byproduct of the milling process is *rice flour*. Rice flour is a very versatile product and is used in baby foods, baking products and cereal manufacturing. A popular use of rice flour is in the dried fruit industry. Dried fruit pieces, especially apricots, are shipped to bakeries or used for other food applications. In order to prevent these dried fruit pieces from sticking, they are rolled in rice powder. (Similarly, dates are commonly rolled in oat flour.)

For this reason, dried fruit requires a strict and reliable Kosher for Passover certification to ensure that the dried fruit is not rolled in powder and does not come into contact with any other fruit in the packaging areas.

Milled rice comes in many sizes, the most popular of which is *long-grain*, used to make pilafs, salads, and side dishes. Popular long-grain rice types include white and brown rice; and *aromatic rice* varieties like *jasmine* and *basmati*.

Brown rice's light brown color is a result of the bran layers covering the rice germ. Due to its natural and highly nutritious state, prolonged shelf life is always a concern (*see side bar*).

Aromatic rice is naturally aged to develop its rich full-bodied flavor. There are no *kashrus* problems associated with aromatic rice since no additional flavorings are added. Persian rice dishes like *tahdig* are exclusively made with *basmati* rice.

Second-head rice, discussed below, is used for a myriad of products, including cereals, beer, and manufactured rice products, such as enriched rice.

Medium-grain rice is wider than long-grain. It is about half as wide as it is long, and results in soft, chewy grains that stick together when cooked. Indian *biryani*, Italian *risotto* and Spanish *paella* are dishes that typically use medium-grain rice.

Short-grain rice has a wide, squat shape; it is wider than it is long, and is used for recipes that call for the rice to clump or stick together. *Sticky rice* and *sushi rice* are types of short-grain rice. They are preferred by Japanese sushi chefs and are the rice of choice in Chinese cuisine.

Processing: The Myriad Transformations of Ordinary Rice

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

There are two common manufacturing methods used to replace the nutrients in a pearled kernel of rice: *enriching* and *parboiling*.

Enriching: One method is to coat broken pieces of rice, known as *second-head rice*, with vitamins and minerals, and then mix them into the pearled white milled rice. This is what is meant by *enriched rice*. The second-head rice is sent to an enrichment company, where vitamins are sprayed directly onto the rice pieces. These are then returned to the rice producer to be blended along with the long white grains as they are being packaged.

U.S. law requires white rice to be enriched with additional vitamins and nutrients to compensate for the nutritional deficiencies created through the milling process. Obviously, enrichments have to be kosher approved. But since domestic white rice generally cannot be produced enrichment-free, and vitamin enrichments are only certified for year-round use and exclude Pesach, the Sephardic Jewish community – whose custom permits *kitniyot* (i.e., legumes such as rice, beans, and corn) on Pesach – cannot purchase enriched rice for Pesach.⁷

6 Orach Chaim 208, Mishna Brura 28.

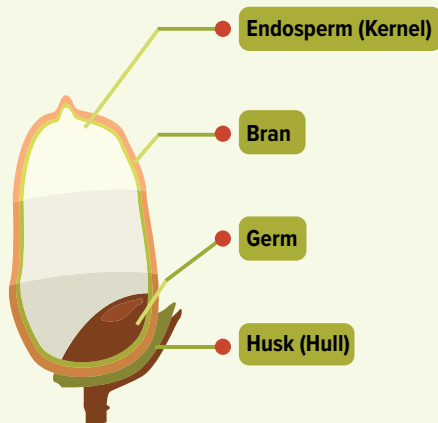
7 Ibid., 453:1.





EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW About Storing and Checking Brown Rice

Parboiling: The second method used to replace the nutrients is *parboiling*. While the rice kernels are still in their hulls, the kernels are steamed in large kettles so that the natural nutrients are locked into the rice kernel. After parboiling, the rice is dried to its previous state of moisture – in a dry kernel at 11% – and the hull is removed. If the bran layers remain intact, the product is termed *converted brown rice*. If the rice is pearled, it is termed *converted rice* or *parboiled rice*.



Consumers often call and ask whether there is a problem of *bishul akum* with parboiled rice. Rice is unquestionably a grain that is *olah al shulchan melachim*, fit to be served at a banquet, wedding or state dinner.⁸ *Halacha* has mandated that an observant Jew must perform an integral part of the cooking process, such as turning on the fire, regarding certain products such as rice. This process is known as *bishul Yisroel*.

Parboiling, however, does not require *bishul Yisroel* for the following reasons:

1. Rice grain in their hulls are not fit to be served at a fancy banquet (or at a regular meal, for that matter).⁹
2. Parboiling does not steam the grain to an edible state.
3. The rice kernel is steamed only so that the nutrients will be absorbed. Once the dried kernel is hulled and pearled, the criteria of *bishul Yisroel* would apply.

Precooking and Instant Rice: Instant rice is a long-grain rice product that has been precooked and re-dried. It can be sold as a boil-in-bag product, minute rice, or simply as instant rice. Instant rice does not require thorough cooking – in fact, it does not need to be re-cooked at all. By letting the instant rice sit in cold water for a few minutes, it will re-hydrate into a perfectly edible product. This discovery raised *bishul akum* concerns.

Incontrovertibly, rice requires *bishul Yisroel*. There are *halachic* opinions that if a fully cooked product requiring *bishul Yisroel* is dehydrated and requires a second cooking, it is considered *bishul Yisroel* if a *Yehudi* recooks it.¹⁰ This was the common assumption about instant rice, which changed once it was discovered that instant rice could be hydrated in cold water.

Today, the policy is for the *mashgiach* to light the boilers that provide the steam to cook the instant rice. However, there still remains a discrepancy among *kashrus* agencies as to whether instant rice requires *bishul Yisroel*. Furthermore, lighting the boiler is a solution for *Ashkenazim*, who follow the *Rama's* position that lighting the fire fulfills the *bishul Yisroel* criteria.¹¹ *Sephardim*, who follow the opinion of *Maran Beit Yosef*, require that a *Yehudi* actually place the rice into the cooker before lighting the fire at the beginning of the process.¹²

8 Y. D. 113:1.
9 Ibid., 2, *Rema*.
10 Ibid., 12, *Yad Efraim*.
11 Ibid., 7, *Rema*.
12 Ibid., 8.



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Brown rice is a whole natural grain that goes through minimal processing. It is therefore more susceptible to infestation concerns than grains that are more processed.

Whole unprocessed grains can have microscopic eggs attached to them. If left in improper conditions, like warm or humid environments, they can hatch and may pose a seemingly 'sudden' infestation, even in well-sealed containers. Insects like beetles and weevils found in packages of brown rice are known as 'pantry pests' and are the result of improper storage. This can happen at any point in the supply chain, from the initial processing or packing plant to the kitchen pantry.

To minimize the risk of infestation, STAR-K recommends brown rice be checked prior to use using the method outlined below. Anyone who wishes to stock up on large quantities of brown rice (or any grains) should first check the rice, then store it for at least 96 hours at below freezing temperatures. This will effectively kill any eggs present so they can no longer hatch. Afterwards, provided the rice remains properly sealed, it can be stored for a long time.

STAR-K recommends the following procedure to check brown rice prior to use:

1. Place the brown rice (no more than 16oz at a time) in a fine steel mesh strainer. Ideally, mesh size should be #12 mesh or larger.
2. Shake the brown rice over a lightbox or white paper for 25-30 seconds.
3. Examine the surface of the lightbox or paper for any insect presence. If no insects are found, the rice may be used. If any insects are found, the rice should be discarded.

The most common insects found in brown rice are beetles and weevils. For links to a video demonstration of how to do a proper rice check, photos of rice weevils, and strainer purchase recommendation, go to checkforinsects.com, and click on **Rice, Brown**.

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This cooked rice product is not the only item that has gained popularity in the contemporary kosher marketplace. Mediterranean diet delicacies, such as *dolmas* (or stuffed grape leaves, the Sephardic version of stuffed cabbage) are now widely available. Brined grape leaves are used instead of cabbage leaves, and the filling is a combination of cooked rice, herbs and spices. Most productions take place in Mediterranean countries such as Turkey, Greece or Bulgaria. Some organizations require *hashgacha temidis* during specialty productions, while others allow the rice cooker or boiler to be turned on prior to the production. Though these manufacturers do not typically deal with non-kosher ingredients, *bishul akum* has become a front burner issue with pre-cooked rice products.

Rice Blends: A very popular rice combination is long-grain rice and wild rice. 'Wild' rice is not actually a variety of rice, but rather a grass that blends well with rice. These simple combinations have no kashrus concerns, provided they have no seasonings.

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

Popping Rice, Rice Cakes, and Puffed Rice Cereal: Rice cakes are a seemingly simple, healthy and kosher rice snack. Rice kernels are placed in a disc-like popper. To produce a single rice cake, steam is applied to the rice kernels, putting pressure on the rice and causing it to pop; the popped rice assumes the shape of the disc and forms a 'cake' of rice.

Rice cakes can come in a variety of flavors, which require certification. Flavorings are added directly into the rice cake disc so that the flavor will be blended as the rice pops.

To produce puffed rice cereal, the rice kernels are heated as loose grains (in contrast to the disc-like popper described above), and steamed under pressure. The grains will puff up as single pieces of puffed rice. Rice Krispies are also puffed in a puffing tower but are subsequently baked or toasted into what is known as crisp rice.

Rice Milk: This beverage has become a popular milk alternative for those who are lactose intolerant or follow a FODMAP diet. It is manufactured by boiling either brown or white rice and strained. Rice milk can come in unsweetened, sweetened and flavored, and fortified varieties. Flavored varieties require certification.

Fermenting: The process of fermenting rice can yield an impressive gamut of products, including beer, rice wine, rice vinegar and miso.

Brewing – Many breweries use *brewer's rice* as well as barley to make beer. Brewer's rice is essentially *second-head rice* (mentioned above), the broken shards of rice created during the milling process. Some beer beverages are made from brewer's rice and sorghum.

Rice Wine – *Sake* is Japanese rice wine that is fermented but not distilled. It resembles beer more than wine. Since it is not carbonated,

its taste is similar to that of wine. Even though the rice is cooked in the brewing process, there is no issue of *bishul akum* because the intention of the cooking is to consume the liquid rather than to eat the rice.

There are five types of *sake* produced in Japan, but only one, *junmai*, is sold in the U.S. *Junmai* is pure *sake*, which means that only rice is used in its production. Other varieties add a small amount of distilled alcohol to the blend and are taxed at such a high rate that it would make the cost to import them prohibitive. *Sake* can therefore be used without special kosher certification. -

Rice vinegar – is a popular vinegar used in both Chinese and Japanese cuisines. It is fermented from glutinous rice or rice wine. The style of rice vinegar changes depending upon the variety of rice used in the fermentation process – black rice vinegar is derived from black rice, red rice vinegar from red, and white rice vinegar from white.

Seasoned rice vinegar is a combination of *sake* and rice vinegar. Rice vinegars vary in their acidity and taste. They are milder than distilled grain vinegar and have specific applications in Chinese, Japanese and other Asian cuisines. Of course, all varieties of rice vinegar require reliable kosher certification.

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

As with *sake*, since this is an intermediate step in the whole process of *miso* production, and one has no intention to eat the rice, there is no concern of *bishul akum*.

The Quandary About Orez

The Talmud provides a brief discourse regarding the correct *bracha* one makes before eating *orez*. If one chews the kernel, the blessing made is the same as for vegetables, *Ha'adama*. However, if the *orez* is ground, baked or cooked, the *bracha* is *Mezonos*, the same as for cakes and cookies.

The first question the *poskim* grapple with is the type of grain being discussed. Rashi maintains that *orez* is millet. Tosfos takes issue with that interpretation and maintains that *orez* is rice.

Based on the fact that rice was not introduced into Europe until the 1400s, it is possible that neither Rashi nor the Baalei Tosfos actually saw rice. Furthermore, when the Shulchan Aruch discusses this issue, the more contemporary commentators are split regarding the identity of *orez*. The Vilna Gaon holds that *orez* is rice, which is consistent with the *Mishna Brura's* conclusion.

Real Blessings in Disguise

The *poskim* offer many opinions about the *bracha* that one should make on conventionally cooked rice, whether *Ha'adama* or *Mezonos*. Likewise, they discuss the proper *bracha acharona* one should recite, whether *Al Hamichya* or *Borei Nefashos*.

In the end, as we mentioned at the start of our journey, the Hebrew mnemonic of אמן – *Aleph, Mem, Nun* – holds the final key: *Orez, Mezonos, Nefashos*.

Amen! It's a real blessing in disguise. ☆



NEW UNDER STAR-K

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Only when bearing STAR-K symbol

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CANNED VEGETABLES

BENTRE IMPORT EXPORT

Vietnam
COCONUT PRODUCTS

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Westborough, MA
TOMATO PRODUCTS

BSD FOODS

Mexico
POWDERED PEANUT BUTTER

CARMICHAEL'S HONEY

New Iberia, LA
HONEY

COFFEE CONNEXION

Lebanon, NJ
SAUCES & DIPS

EVEREST HANDELS GMBH

Austria
RICE

FRUITAVIA

Lakewood, NJ
FRUIT

GLOBAL VEG CORP

New York, NY
TOMATO PRODUCTS

GRACEKENNEDY FOODS (USA)

Medley, FL
TORTILLAS/TACOS

GREAT EASTERN SUN TRADING

Asheville, NC
DEHYDRATED VEGETABLES

KEHE DISTRIBUTORS

Naperville, IL
PICKLED PRODUCTS

LLC GREIVIS INVEST

Ukraine
OLIVE & VEGETABLE OILS

MARSHMALLOW CENTRAL

Lakewood, NJ
CANDY & CONFECTIONERY ITEMS

MED CUISINE (EU/UK)

United Kingdom
CANNED VEGETABLES

MINIMALIST BAKER FOODS

San Antonio, TX
BAKING MIXES, GLUTEN-FREE

MODERN GENERAL DREAMY

COFFEE CO
Sag Harbor, NY
COFFEES

MOE'S MINDSET ENERGY

Brooklyn, NY
VITAMINS & NUTRITIONAL
SUPPLEMENTS

PAPA JOE'S SALT

Medord Lakes, NJ
SPICES & SEASONINGS

PHOENICIA GROUP

Canada
BEANS & LEGUMES, OLIVE OILS

ROLAND FOODS

New York, NY
RICE

SALADS BY SARA

Baltimore, MD
CATERER

SAM'S CLUB

Bentonville, AR
SNACK FOODS, DRIED FRUIT

SANDSAGE LLC

Sunny Isles Beach, FL
BEVERAGES & DRINK MIXES

SPICE & MORE CORP

Brooklyn, NY
SPICES & SEASONINGS, NUTS &
SEEDS

TGT TEKSTIL GIDA

Turkey
SPICES & SEASONINGS

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

Philadelphia, PA
RESTAURANT/TAKE OUT

US FOODS

Rosemont, IL
OLIVES

VOSS PRODUCTION AMERICAS

New York, NY
WATER



NEW UNDER STAR-D

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SAUCES & DIPS

FOOD LION

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DAIRY PRODUCTS

MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA MILK PRODUCERS

Reston, VA
DAIRY PRODUCTS

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS

INTERNATIONAL INGREDIENTS & EXCIPIENTS

India
PHARMACEUTICALS

KERISOM FOOD ENTERPRISES

China
FLAVORS & EXTRACTS

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS

Refer to letter of certification

AGROQUISKAY SAC

Peru
FROZEN VEGETABLES

AMAR AQUATIC

India
NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

ANHUI GSH BIO-TECHNOLOGY

China
VITAMIN COMPONENTS

BAYANNUR HUAHENG BIOTECHNOLOGY

China
AMINO ACID

BENTRE IMPORT EXPORT

Vietnam
COCONUT PRODUCTS

BOTANIC SUPPLEMENTS

India
NUTRITIONAL COMPONENTS

CHEMGROUP

Louisville, KY
LUBRICANTS

CHINA MEHECO CORPORTATION

China
HERBAL EXTRACTS

DANGSHAN COUNTY YANGSHI INDUSTRY

China
CANNED FRUIT

DANGSHAN XINGZHENG FOOD

China
CANNED FRUIT

DANGSHANXIAN JINFA FOOD

China
CANNED FRUIT

GMK TRANSPORT SERVICE

India
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Albuquerque, NM
SPICES & SEASONINGS

HEAT AND CONTROL INC

Union, MO
LUBRICANTS

HENAN SHUGUANG BIOTECHNOLOGY

China
SOY PRODUCTS

HENGKAI (ZHEJIANG) BIO-INNOVATION

China
BAKING ADDITIVES

JAYSHRI PROPACK

India
PLASTIC PRODUCTS

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China
NUTRITIONAL COMPONENTS

JIANGXI GANNAN HAIXIN PHARMACEUTICAL

China
VITAMIN COMPONENTS

JIEYANG CHENGFENG INDUSTRIAL

China
CANNED FRUITS & VEGETABLES

JINGLIANG LONGJIANG BIOTECHNOLOGY

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ACIDS & ACIDULANTS, STARCH
PRODUCTS

MEGHMANI FINECHEM LIMITED

India
INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS

MENGYIN WAIMAO HUASHENG

China
NUTS AND SEEDS

NATURE LOG ORGANICS

India
SPICES & OLEORESINS

PROTEIOS GREEN

India
HERBAL PRODUCTS

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SPICES & SEASONINGS

QINGDAO KEYUAN MARINE BIOCHEM

China
NUTRITIONAL COMPONENTS

REDLEAF BIOLOGICS INC

Georgetown, KY
HERBAL EXTRACTS

REHOBOTH NATURE FINE FOODS

India
PICKLED PRODUCTS

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China
SWEETENERS & STARCH
PRODUCTS

SHANDONG GREEN SWEETENER BIOTECH

China
SWEETENERS

SHANDONG GUOHONG BIOTECH

China
SOY PRODUCTS

SHANDONG JIANYIHONG

BIOPHARMACEUTICAL
China

SWEETENERS

SHANDONG JUXINYUAN
AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY

China
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SHK CHEMTECH INDUSTRIES

India
INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS

SIGMA FOODS

India
DEHYDRATED VEGETABLES

SUZHOU MEITAI BIOTECHNOLOGY

China
NUTRITIONAL COMPONENTS

TGT TEKSTIL GIDA

Turkey
SPICES & SEASONINGS

THANGAM EXTRACTS

India
HERBAL EXTRACTS

WUHU MEINO NUTRITION

TECHNOLOGY
China
NUTRITIONAL COMPONENTS

XIAMEN TOMATO FOOD CO

China
TOMATO PRODUCTS

XINGHUA LIANFU FOOD CO

China
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VEGETABLES

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Kosherfest 2022

STAR-K International on Display

STAR-K's display of products from around the world at this year's Kosherfest trade show at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in New Jersey.



L to R: STAR-K Tunisia mashgiach, Hanina Sayada, manning the booth, and STAR-K president, Avrom Pollak, in conversation with Brazilian wine rep, Frederico Junqueira.

STAR-K KOSHER CERTIFICATION

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

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