

KOSHER SPIRIT

בית
כסלו תשע"ח
KISLEV 5778

CERTIFIED SOUL NUTRITION



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by Rabbi Chaim Fogelman



Dear Reader,

Chanukah is all about the “kosher spirit” of Yiddishkeit. It is well known that the Greeks didn’t object to the Torah or the mitzvos per se; it was the “kosher spirit”, the G-dliness behind the Torah and mitzvos, that they were intent on quashing.

Here at the © we put special emphasis on the *spirit* of kosher and its ramifications. Mitzvos should be done with joy and cannot be sustained if there is a constant feeling of hardship. At the © we are very aware of this and work diligently to set up companies and factories with kosher systems that can be adhered to happily.

This holds true not only for our customers, but for our own wonderful staff as well. We just experienced our annual Mashgiach Conference with rabbis attending from all corners of the globe, gathering to learn, grow and bond together over their common goal of making the world a more kosher place.

A vegetable checking seminar headed by the © Tolaim Committee followed the conference, with the goal of reviewing and explaining the latest findings in cleaning and checking techniques. This seminar was open to all mashgichim, both those who use these techniques in their work and those who wanted to learn for their own homes and communities.

We all witnessed the horrible devastation of the last few months caused by hurricanes and earthquakes, but we got a chance to see the wonderful *spirit* of humanity as well. Read about how the Houston kosher community managed to retain their kosher standards even in such difficult situations, while providing physical and spiritual assistance to those affected by Hurricane Harvey.

In this issue, you’ll read about sweet dairy products and sour vinegar, explore all the new companies that have joined the kosher spirit by getting their products certified by © kosher and catch an inside look at the famed Kosherfest trade show.

Let our spirits soar during the Festival of Light and join me in wishing all a freilichen Chanukah.

Rabbi Chaim Fogelman
Editor in Chief

KOSHER SPIRIT Chanukah 5778

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Oil

We all know about the Chanukah miracle when a tiny jar of pure, sealed olive oil lasted for 8 days, even though it was only enough for one. While olive oil was the oil of choice in the Beis HaMikdash, there are many other oils available today to optimize your healthy cooking.



1
Canola

oil has a neutral taste, is low in saturated fat, and has a high smoke point (400° F), making it ideal for frying.



2
Coconut

oil makes a great body cream and its texture makes it a perfect pareve alternative to butter for baking.



3
Peanut

oil has a strong taste and a high smoke point (450° F), so it's great for making Asian stir-fry dishes.



4
Avocado

oil is full of heart-healthy monounsaturated fats and has a relatively high smoke point (520° F). It's neutral flavor and minimal processing makes it great all-around cooking oil.



5
Safflower

oil is high in omega-9 fatty acids and has a high smoke point (510° F). It has a neutral flavor and is low in saturated fats.



6
Sesame

oil has a potent flavor and is an excellent alternative to peanut oil (for those with allergies). It is great in salads and in Asian cooking.



7
Flaxseed

oil is high in omega-3 fatty acids and is great for those who don't consume a lot of fish. It should NOT be used in cooking, just drizzled on salads, over hummus, or added to smoothies.




8
Olive

oil has multiple grades – from extra virgin to “pure”. Extra virgin has the most intense flavor and is cold-pressed. Other types of olive oil are more chemically processed, or mixed with other oils to reduce cost. Extra virgin olive oil is the best oil to use for lighting the Chanukah menorah.


*OILS (OTHER THAN EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL) REQUIRE A RELIABLE KOSHER SUPERVISION.

CONSUMER Questions FOR THE

We at the  are happy to receive your kosher questions...

Dear Kosher Spirit,
I'm confused about why certain products are certified "D" or "DE" when I don't see any dairy ingredients in the product. Why do some pareve products say, "May contain traces of milk."? Can you please explain?

The responds:

1. Dairy equipment (DE) means that the equipment is also used for dairy with no kosher cleaning protocol between the runs - almost always chalav stam. People who are stringent about Cholov Yisroel keilim should not use DE products. Some DE products bear the dairy symbol, because the manufacturer wants to be able to switch to a dairy ingredient without having to print new labels. Consumers are welcome to call the  to verify status.
2. Sometimes the entire plant is certified as dairy (often because the company does not want to stop production for koshering or extra monitoring required for pareve products) and there are no kosher safeguards in place preventing a change to an actual dairy ingredient.
3. Sometimes the product may contain actual dairy, even though it isn't written on the label, because the machinery still discharges some dairy product at the beginning of a new run (like some very famous chocolate chips).
4. Sometimes an ingredient used in the product came from an all dairy facility and

therefore makes the end product certified dairy.

5. A pareve product may say, "May contain traces of milk," on the label because some people are allergic to dairy on such a severe level that they will have a reaction from airborne particles of dairy being present during production. Airborne particles do not pose any kashrus issue, so this is merely an allergen warning.
6. In addition, from an allergen perspective the main concern is lactose. If the lactose is removed then ingredient can be called

"non-dairy", although the ingredient is a milk derivative. The common example is non-dairy creamer that has sodium caseinate, which is a milk derived ingredient but without lactose.





YOU *Be The Mashgiach*

Can you find the "8" differences in these pictures?



If you found 15 perhaps YOU can be a mashgiach! 😊



Oven Question Clarification

By Rabbi Levi Schapiro
Rabbinic Coordinator at OK Kosher

Thank you to all of our readers who called and emailed asking for clarification about the oven chart in the Tishrei issue. It is our hope that this written explanation will clear up any confusion.

I cooked a pareve cake in a fleishig oven. Can I eat it with milk?

If a fleishig pan was used, according to Ashkenazic custom one may not eat it with milk, but does not need to wait 6 hours to eat dairy. If a new, or pareve, pan was used and the oven was clean, there is room to allow it.

If a milchig pan was used, the answer depends on many different factors:

Uncovered Liquid Batter

Pan Ben Yomo (used within last 24 hours)

Clean oven (ben yomo) – pan and cake not kosher, oven and pan needs to be kashered

Clean oven (eino ben yomo) – bidieived kosher, can be eaten with milk

Not clean oven – pan and cake not kosher, oven and pan needs to be kashered

Pan Eino Ben Yomo (not used within last 24 hours)

Not clean oven, or oven ben yomo – cake bidieived kosher, pan not kosher, cake cannot be eaten with milk, oven is kosher

Clean oven (eino ben yomo) – bidieived kosher, can be eaten with milk

Dry Batter or Covered Pan – bidieived kosher and can be eaten with milk

What is White Vinegar?

Rabbi Sholom Ber Hendel

The word vinegar is a combination of two French words, *vin* (wine) and *aigre* (sour). White vinegar, the most commonly used form, is a clear liquid with a sour taste, which is used to add taste in cooking, pickling, and salad dressings. It is also used as a preservative, and to help with cleaning and for medical purposes. The main ingredient is acetic acid which is diluted with water.

HOW IS VINEGAR MADE?

Vinegar is made by fermenting alcohol into acetic acid. Alcohol itself is a fermentation from a carbohydrate (sugar) source. The first step is to ferment carbohydrates into alcohol. Fruit juices such as apple, grape, etc., or hydrolyzed starches such as corn, wheat, barley, etc., can all be used. When using starches they first need to be hydrolyzed by processing with enzymes and hot water, which breaks down the starches (long chains) into carbohydrates (smaller chains).

In this fermentation process, yeast breaks down the carbohydrates into alcohol and carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide gas bubbles out of the fermenting solution into the air leaving a mixture of alcohol and water. The mixture is distilled to separate the water from the alcohol.

The next step is to ferment the alcohol into acetic acid. Acetic acid bacteria, along with nutrients to help its growth, is added to the alcohol to convert the alcohol into acetic acid. The acetic acid is filtered, and can be concentrated or diluted with water, sometimes pasteurized, and bottled.

IS VINEGAR KOSHER?

All ingredients, additives, and processing aids need to be kosher for the vinegar to be certified kosher. In the USA, the kashrus aspect is not as challenging as abroad, as white vinegar is typically made from corn (kitniyos for Passover). In the rest of the

world, vinegar can be a kosher concern, since the alcohol can be derived from a grape source (*Stam Yainom*), dairy source, or from chometz sources such as, wheat and barley, which pose a real issue for Passover.

Since vinegar can be made from anything with sugar, there are many types of vinegar, depending on their ingredient origin and additives and each requires reliable kosher supervision. Balsamic vinegar and wine vinegar are both made from grapes and require more supervision than white and apple cider vinegars.

Since vinegar is considered a *Davar Charif* (sharp food), which is assur with *kavush* (when left in a vessel for 24 hours), even *b'di'eved* (done by mistake), and heat can be used in the process, it is imperative that the equipment is dedicated to kosher products, or kosherized after each non-kosher run.

01 I put a dairy dish in a meat dishwasher (or vice versa). Do I need to kasher my dish?

If the dish/utensil is metal or wooden, one should leave it unused for 24 hours and then kasher it by cleaning it and submerging in boiling water for several seconds. Then the utensil should be rinsed in cold water. For other types of dishes one should consult their local Rav as there are differences of opinion. The dishwasher itself does not need to be kashered.

02 Can I use the same dishwasher for dairy and meat providing I don't mix the two when I wash them?

The dishwasher should be designated for either milk or meat and not used interchangeably.

03 Can I wash meat (or dairy) and pareve dishes together? Can I wash pareve dishes in my meat (or dairy) dishwasher?

One should not wash the meat (or dairy) and pareve dishes in the same dishwasher. However, if one accidentally put a pareve dish in the dishwasher with the meat (or dairy) dishes it does not require koshering. One should leave it unused for 24 hours and then continue using it as usual.

04 Can a dishwasher be kashered (either from treif to kosher, meat to dairy, or year-round to Passover)?

Most poskim are of the opinion that one should not kasher a dishwasher.

05 Can I load the dishwasher on Shabbos or Yom Tov?

If one removes the dishes from the table one at a time (or in stacks of the same type of dish), then they may be loaded into the dishwasher. However, if the dishes are all mixed up (for example, they were all put into the sink during the meal and one later decides to load the dishwasher), then one is not allowed to separate them to load them in the dishwasher. If one were to rinse each dish with the intention of cleaning it, even superficially, once the dish is in the person's hand it may be loaded directly into the dishwasher.

06 Can I empty the dishwasher on Shabbos or Yom Tov?

The dishwasher can be emptied for immediate use, providing that no lights go on or off when the dishwasher is opened or closed.

07 Can a non-Jew run my dishwasher on Shabbos or Yom Tov?

A non-Jew may not run your dishwasher on Shabbos or Yom Tov; however, they can load the dishwasher even if the dishes were first mixed up and placed in the sink.

08 Do I need to use kosher dishwashing soap?

One is not required to use dishwashing soap that has kosher certification, but it is preferable to do so.

your Kosher Kitchen The Dishwasher

By Rabbi Yakov Teichman
Rabbinic Coordinator at © Kasher



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ASIAN MOCK CRAB RED POTATO LATKES:



These Asian Mock Crab Red Potato Latkes double as a classic Chanukah dish and a fish course! They are seasoned with a fusion of Asian inspired flavors and then topped with a rich Garlic-Ginger Tehina.

SERVES: 5

INGREDIENTS

ASIAN MOCK CRAB RED POTATO LATKES:

1 lb. imitation crab, shredded by hand
 1 lb. red potatoes, shredded
 1 tablespoon and 1 teaspoon Old Bay Spice
 2 eggs
 3 tablespoons sesame oil
 1 tablespoon soy sauce
 2 teaspoons rice wine vinegar
 1 bunch scallions, chopped
 2 tablespoons cilantro, minced
 1 cup flour
 1 cup panko bread-crumbs
 Canola oil

INGREDIENTS

GARLIC-GINGER TEHINA:

1/2 cup tahini paste
 1/2 cup water
 2 teaspoons ginger, minced
 2 teaspoons garlic, minced
 1 tablespoon cilantro, minced
 1/2 teaspoon maple syrup
 Juice of 1/2 a lemon
 Salt and pepper

PREPARATION

1. Mix all the ingredients together just until incorporated. Turn the stove onto medium-high.
2. Place a pan on the stove and fill with about a 1/2 inch oil. When hot (but not smoking), drop a heaping tablespoon of the potato mixture into the oil and flatten with a spatula.
3. Fry on one side for about 2 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm with Garlic-Ginger Tehina.



What's the Deal with Dairy?

Cholov Yisroel and Non-Cow Milks

By Rabbi Yoni Rappaport, Rabbinic Coordinator

From the moment any mammal is born one of the first things to pass its lips is milk¹. Throughout most people's lives their day will start with milk consumption, in one form or another. For most people (unless lactose sensitive or vegan) milk is a dietary staple.

As Jewish people, we are bound by the laws of kashrus. With regards to dairy, one of the primary kashrus concerns is the origin of the milk. The rule is that whatever comes from a kosher animal is kosher, and whatever doesn't come from a kosher animal is not². Therefore kosher milk must originate from a kosher mammal (e.g. cows, goats and sheep).

Practically, kosher animals are more conducive for milk and dairy products compared to non-kosher animals (e.g. pigs, camels and horses). Non-kosher animals are harder to milk and produce far less than kosher animals. The milk itself doesn't separate from the cream as well as kosher milk, and it is extremely difficult to produce cheese and butter from it.

Nevertheless, to ensure the authenticity of kosher milk our Sages instituted that the milking needs supervision by a religious Jew, referred to as Cholov Yisroel. Milk from a kosher animal without Jewish supervision will be rendered non-kosher, referred to as Cholov Akum. Cholov Akum is a rabbinical prohibition and, therefore, is not as severe a prohibition as milk from a non-kosher animal, which is a Biblical prohibition³.

Their concern wasn't that the milk could be substituted for a non-kosher version, since kosher and non-kosher milk are distinctively different. Rather their concern was that non-kosher milk could potentially be unidentifiably mixed in with the kosher milk, especially if it wasn't specifically produced for the Jewish market. In ancient times where there wasn't mass production, there was a high risk of cross-contamination from different milks, since the same farm had different types of animals.

The supervision for Cholov Yisroel doesn't require the Jew to be present at all times per se. Rather, the Jew only

needs to be present at the beginning to inspect the equipment that it is clean; otherwise, during the milking, the Jew needs to inspect at any time (known as yotzei v'nichnas). This is on condition that there are only kosher animals present, the non-Jew is aware of kosher requirements, and that the non-Jew is expecting the Jew to show up at any time⁴. The frequency of yotzei v'nichnas itself depends on the requirements of the kosher certifying agency. Certifications with higher standards insist on a yotzei v'nichnas frequency of at least once per hour, at random times within each hour.⁴

is Cholov Yisroel Always Required?

There are differences in opinions as to the extent of the requirement of Cholov Yisroel. There are opinions that Cholov Yisroel is only required if there is a concern for non-kosher milk. However if there aren't any non-kosher animals in the area then Cholov Yisroel is not required, and kosher milk can be consumed without Jewish supervision⁵.



Other opinions disagree and hold that Cholov Yisroel is always required. Although Cholov Yisroel was created due to specific concerns, the law was established that it would be required regardless of the validity of any concerns. Only a Beis Din of equal or greater stature (quality and quantity) than the one that established the law, has the power to reverse it⁶.

The latter opinions were accepted as Halacha by most authorities, requiring Cholov Yisroel regardless if the concerns are still applicable.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein's Leniency

In 1954 Rabbi Moshe Feinstein penned a famous letter ruling that milk produced in US companies can also be permitted⁷. This leniency is even in accordance with the above opinions that always require Cholov Yisroel.

He bases this leniency on the principle of Anan Sahadei (lit. we are the witnesses), that absolute knowledge of something is equivalent to seeing it, which is a principle used throughout Jewish law. An example he brings is when a bride and groom are in the

Yichud room the witnesses remain outside. Even though they aren't present in the room, they are valid witnesses. Another example he brings is if a convert immersed in the mikvah and the witnesses were outside, the immersion would be valid based on the same principle (although not all opinions hold of this).

Similarly, in our case, the principle of Anan Sahadei can be applied. There is no incentive for a mainstream milk company in the US to mix kosher and non-kosher milk, as they would be in violation of federal law and thus risking their business. Additionally, milk from non-kosher animals is very scarce in comparison to milk from kosher animals so it wouldn't make sense for companies to go so far to obtain it. The above knowledge is enough to permit milk from mainstream large US companies based on the principle of Anan Sahadei. This leniency only applies to commercial farms that are subject to FDA laws, or other governments that have similar laws that are properly

enforced.

In addition, the leniency only applies to milk, as other dairy products (including butter⁸) require kosher certification due to the addition of other ingredients.




According to the FDA only cow milk can be legally defined as "milk". Although legally other types of milk can be produced and sold commercially including non-kosher milk (e.g. camel), the name of the mammal must precede the word "milk" on the label. This law applies to any milk that isn't cow milk both kosher and non-kosher, including goat, sheep, water buffalo and camel. This also applies to milk products as well, not just bottled milk.

There are many federal laws pertaining to milk farms and milk processing facilities. These laws include milk from all types of animals. The FDA requires semiannual inspections



to milk farms, and up to quarter annual inspections in milk processing facilities. On top of that each state can add their own laws and inspection requirements. Though these inspections are preformed diligently by the FDA and state auditors they differ from inspections performed by a kosher agency, as those would be kosher specific and unannounced⁹.

Many communities throughout the world rely on Rabbi Moshe Feinstein's leniency referring to it as Cholov Stam,

although there are numerous opinions that disagree¹⁰. The  and other kosher agencies certify milk productions based on this leniency to cater to those who are not makpid on Cholov Yisroel. These products will be labeled as /Dairy. Please note that most dairy certified products are Cholov Stam. The  certifies Cholov Yisroel productions as well and it will be clearly stated on the label. The Cholov Yisroel consumer must be diligent in purchasing products only when Cholov Yisroel is printed on the label.

The Case for Cholov Yisroel

Apart from the fact that there are many halachic authorities that disagree with Rabbi Moshe Feinstein's leniency, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein himself writes at the end of the letter that one should be strict to obtain Cholov Yisroel, and that he himself is strict. In another letter he answers a school that wanted to use regular milk (Cholov Stam) to feed their students that they should only feed them Cholov Yisroel. In another letter he writes that the leniency should only be used in extreme

circumstances where Cholov Yisroel is difficult to obtain¹¹.

The Chasam Sofer, as well as others, write that there are additional hidden reasons for the observance of Cholov Yisroel, and therefore one should be strict¹². Numerous stories have been recorded about people and children who suffered from a variety of issues and were told by holy Tzadikim to be careful to only consume Cholov Yisroel. The first Lubavitcher Rebbe wrote that Cholov Akum interfered with faith in G-d¹³, which is why the Lubavitcher Rebbe encouraged Yidden to keep Cholov Yisroel.

Food gives us life and sustenance. Just as one is careful that the food and drink one consumes should not cause physical harm to oneself, the same caution should be shown towards spiritual harm. To end with the words of Maimonides at the end of laws of forbidden foods, "all that are careful with these things bring extra sanctity and purity to their soul".



1. After birth the mother produces colostrum and only afterwards will produce milk. Colostrum is not considered milk according to the FDA.
2. בכורות ה.
3. עבודה זרה לה.
4. שלחן ערוך יו"ד סי' קטו סעי' א.
5. שו"ת רדב"ז חלק ד סי' עה (אלף קמו), שו"ת תשב"ץ חלק ד (חוט המשולש) טור א סי' לב, פרי חדש יו"ד סי' קטו סי"ק ו
6. שו"ת מהר"י ברונא סי' עה, שו"ת חתם סופר יו"ד סי' קז, כסף משנה הלכות מאכלות אסורות פרק ג הלכה טו, ערוך השלחן יו"ד סי' קטו סעי' ה
7. אגרות משה יו"ד חלק א סי' מז.
8. See Kosher Spirit article "Is Butter Kosher"
9. See Code of Federal Regulations Title 21 section 131 and FDA Pasteurized Milk Ordinance
10. משנה הלכות חלק ד סי' קג, שו"ת באר משה חלק ד סי' נב, חלקת יעקב יו"ד סי' לד (דפוס ישן חלק ב סי' לו
11. אגרות משה יו"ד חלק ב סי' לה, יו"ד חלק ד סי' ה.
12. דרשות חתם סופר עמ' פא, שו"ת דברי יציב או"ח סי' כז.
13. ספר המאמרים אידיש ה'תש"א-תש"ה עמ' 57.



KEEPING KOSHER IN A HURRICANE

An inside look into keeping kosher during the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey

BY DUBY LITVIN

With Chanukah just around the corner, we are reminded of the beautiful message the menorah and the holiday teach us, that “a little light dispels a lot of darkness.” Nothing could be truer in our own lives, as we witnessed as a country during Hurricane Harvey in Houston just a few months ago in August.

I sat down with Rabbi Chaim Lazaroff, Program Director of Chabad of Houston, and co-director, together with his wife Chanie, of Chabad of Uptown. He also led the Chabad Harvey Relief program, one of the projects included partnering with 1Mitzvah, which brought 50 Chabad Rabbis from across the United States to help Houston’s Jewish inhabitants in the aftermath of the storm.

Rabbi Chaim explained to me that while Houston is known for flooding, in the last year 3 years they have been hit harder than usual. According to the National Weather Service, Houston has been hit hard by a 500-year flood for the last 3 years. Rabbi Chaim joked that it should make him over 1500 years old! (*a 500-year flood means a 1 in 500-year chance of that amount of rain*).

While the citizens of Houston are no strangers to flooding, the overall attitude in the city was that the storm would blow over, like it always did. Only once the storm was imminent and the worst-case scenario was predicted did the community begin to realize that this would be different. While they were

emotionally prepared for impact, there was little they could do to practically plan ahead.

When the rains came, the impact was immediate. All food stores and businesses, kosher and non-kosher alike, closed their doors. Rabbi Chaim explained that even if a store didn’t have too much flooding, it still could not open because all the managers and staff were trapped and stranded in their own homes, and the streets were flooded. No one could go anywhere. One store even decided it could not handle the financial burden of rebuilding and closed permanently.

The Grocery Manager in the Kosher Department at Houston’s Kroger said that while the store was only closed for two days, it was long enough to do an incredible amount of damage. The store lost power, and ALL perishables had to be thrown out. City dump trucks came and they had to throw out many pallets of food. It was incredibly sad to see all that food go to waste.

Only one store was able to briefly open up, and within a few hours the shelves were bare. Grocery stores, and especially kosher food stores, were nonexistent in Houston and something needed to be done, immediately.

Chabad of Houston rose to the occasion, and immediately mobilized the #ChabadHarveyRelief command center. They set up 2 locations where meals were mass produced, under the direction of the rebbetzins and their troops of volunteers.

KEEPING KOSHER

One location was Aishel House, the “Bikur Cholim” home where people stay long term when needing medical attention in Houston. The 50 shluchim who visited Houston stayed at Aishel House as well. The other location was the Lubavitch Center of Houston – led by Rabbi Shimon and Chiena Lazaroff. The headquarters then oversaw the serving and delivering of 300-600 meals each day for approximately two weeks.

More than 10 shuls in the greater Houston and surrounding areas were involved in meal preparation for displaced families with too many numbers to even count. Rabbi Chaim recounted how many organizations stepped up, regardless of affiliation, and gathered together to rent and donate enormous truckloads of supplies. He said it was incredibly overwhelming and moving to see how much food people sent; strangers to the Houston community, without batting an eye, stepped up and did what needed to be done, just because they knew the Jews of Houston needed their help.

“Texas Kosher BBQ” a BBQ food truck came down from Dallas and set up shop at the Beren Academy, close to the neighborhood that had been impacted by the storm the most. Over 100 children were essentially homeless and without a school. The food truck settled for a week and served over 500 meals a day.

A team of dedicated shluchim, shluchos, and community members directed the volunteer intake and dispatch from the Chabad Harvey Relief command center, and coordinated the 1Mitzvah #ChabadHarveyRelief rabbis, giving them each a route. Off they went, delivering daily meals either at their homes or where they were displaced, such as shelters and hotels. Pictures went viral of the rabbis in their long beards (my father in law and brother in law included!) schlepping

large pieces of debris from destroyed homes, helping to clear some of the destruction. Each of these rabbis came home after a week of doing all they could, with an inspired tale to bring home to their own communities and continued sharing the light that they witnessed so clearly in Houston. As the famous saying goes, “we rise by lifting others.”

#ConvoyOfHope

The Katz family* moved to Houston the week before Hurricane Harvey hit. Uncomfortable with the weather reports, Mr. Katz decided to rent an Airbnb in Fort Worth TX (a 6-hour drive) for the weekend, to play it safe. By Motzei Shabbos, friends were sending him pictures of the river in front of his street, leaving the Katz family stranded, unable to return home.

Mr. Katz managed to get onto a flight to New York, to be able to work while his family remained behind in the rented space in Fort Worth. While in New York, the reports of the dire food situation began to arrive. At first, Mr. Katz thought that he would simply bring a few boxes back to Houston, but he quickly realized that much more would be necessary, and so #ConvoyofHope was born.

It began with Mr. Katz’s friends in Brooklyn organizing a truck, but donations were few and far between, and sporadic. Within 24 hours, Mr. Katz’s phone was flooded with messages, calls, emails, and texts of people that wanted to help and donate pallets of food. CEO’s from top kosher food distributors and providers were arranging drop offs in Crown Heights and they were on their way to filling up a refrigerated 53-foot semi. Lecheiris, a chesed organization from Brooklyn, called Mr. Katz offering their help and support. Amazingly, within a day they had received donations to



IN A HURRICANE continued

fill the enormous truck and a second 26 foot truck brought by Lecheiris, totalling over 30 pallets in 30 hours.

Over the next day, more and more organizations and people reached out to Mr. Katz, wanting to help. Mr. Katz told me that he was just amazed to see so many people and companies come together and do whatever needed to be done. Dozens of kosher food companies, such as Quality Frozen, Kedem, Mehadrin, Kitov, Ungar's, Supreme Star/Kadouri Div. of Star Snacks, A&H, Chopsie's, Bodek, Snack Delite, Dyna Sea, Amnon's, Aufschnitt, Marzipan Bakery, Ceres Juice, Grab 1 Bars, Pereg, Leiber's, Yerek, Manischewitz, Osem, Zoglo, and Hod Lavan reached out to help. Some CEOs even said that they called their own competitors to join in and get everyone involved to help. When they needed to find truck drivers to bring the food to Houston, volunteers from Lecheiris showed up, saying they all took naps and are ready to drive!

All in all, 11 trucks from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, and Florida were sent, "flooding" Houston with supplies, food and love from the extended Jewish Family. In another example of Hashgocha Protis, Mr. Katz's office in Houston had not yet been set up, and they were able to use the warehouse he has been temporarily working from as the location to stage the supply distribution.

Mr. Katz ended off our interview with one last tidbit. He said that they had such a surplus of supplies that Houston was able to send a truck to Florida when they got hit by Hurricane Irma and repay the kindness shown to them! Additionally, when Puerto Rico got hit by Hurricane Maria, Mr. Katz still had pallets of MRE – "Meals Ready to Eat". With Chabad of Puerto Rico in a desperate situation, miraculously Chabad of Houston found the last United Airlines flight on the tarmac ready to fly and managed to get 3 pallets of MREs onto their flight to help the Jews in Puerto Rico.

What Can We Do to Help the Houston Today?

I asked Rabbi Chaim about how Houston is doing today. Surely, they are "back to normal". He laughed and said they were far from it. The goal now, he explained, is long-term recovery. Some people had insurance, many don't. For many, FEMA was denied. He said the best thing at this point, is donations of gift cards. He said many people won't be able to move back into their homes for at least 6 months to a year. He knows many families who are cramped into small apartments and sleeping on air mattresses.

Currently, Rabbi Chaim is working on distributing money in the form of tuition assistance for the local Jewish Day Schools. So far they have distributed \$200,000 in tuition assistance.

With Chanukah coming up, it is quite easy to make the correlation between a city literally shrouded in darkness, yet

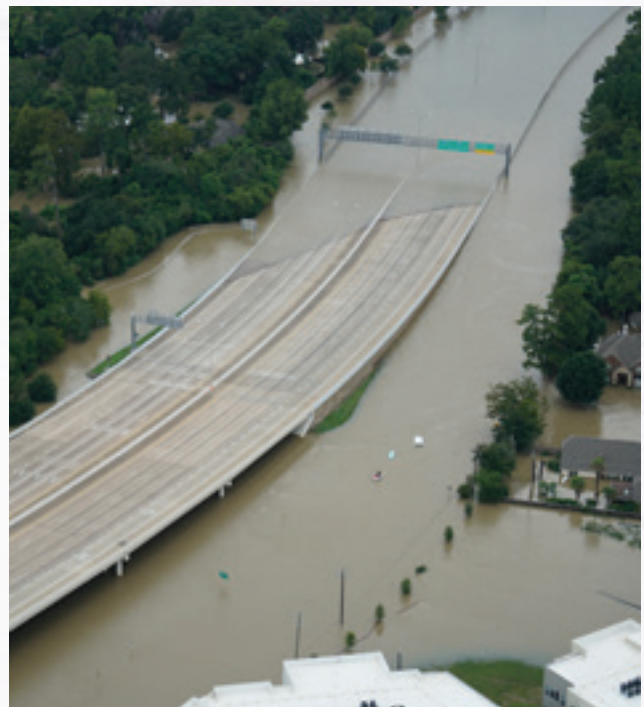
this powerful and tremendous light was felt by the entire country streaming from the beautiful acts of kindness and healing in Houston. I wondered if Chabad of Houston had any special Chanukah plans for this year, and Rabbi Chaim said that Chabad is behind schedule! Due to the storm and the city still in recovery mode, many of their usual Chabad programming and community events are still being planned and they are determining what they will be able to do in the current situation. Preparing for Chanukah has been harder for them this year, but just like the storm brought out the beauty in Houston's inhabitants, there is no doubt that the lights of Chanukah will shine brighter than ever this year.

As Houston continues to heal from the storm, we are reminded of the menorah, the one small flame, dispelling the surrounding darkness. Rabbi Chaim shared that the amount of kindness that they have been "flooded" with, has uplifted the Jewish community's spirits in ways that are beyond description. People around the country (and around the world) don't even realize the indelible impact their small donations had on Jewish Houston.

You can still help the Jewish community in Houston by donating at www.ChabadHouston.com/Relief and help dispel the darkness.

Duby Litvin is a freelance writer from Louisville, Kentucky. She is most known for her annually published Pesach planning guide, "Dubys Pesach Lists" which helps families prepare and organize for the Yom Tov in a stress-free and easy manner. Duby also has a small Kosher bakery and is involved various programming with Chabad of Kentucky.

**Name changed for privacy*





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KOSHERFEST



T IN PHOTOS



MEET OUR STAFF:

BEHIND THE

Interview with Rabbi Yakov Teichman



Rabbi Yakov Teichman


KS: Where did you grow up? Where did you go to yeshiva?


RYT: I was born and raised in Los Angeles, California and attended local yeshivos through mesivta. For bais medrash, I learned at Yeshiva of Philadelphia (Rabbi Levy's alma mater) and later learned in Eretz Yisroel under Rabbi Dovid Soloveitchik. Following my time in Eretz Yisroel, I moved to Lakewood and learned in Beth Medrash Govoha.


KS: What did you do after yeshiva?

RYT: I married my wife Rochel, nee Oratz, in 2008. A cute anecdote – my parents are Avrohom (Shlomo) and Sara, and I am Yakov (Nochum) and my wife is Rochel – just like the avos v'imahos. After our marriage, I learned in kollel for a few years before starting my kashrus career at the Vaad Harabonim of Metro West in New Jersey.

KS: What is your current position at the .


RYT: My current position at the  is Food Service

Operations Coordinator, managing all food service aspects together with Rabbi Kalman Weinfeld, Food Service Department Head. I also head the Tolaim Committee, which researches all tolaim questions and policies, and liaises with the  poskim.

KS: What prepared you the most for your current position at the .

RYT: My father was the Rav HaMachshir of Kehilla Kosher (which merged with the  in 2015). I accompanied my father everywhere and learned as much as I could. They used to call me his Foreign Minister.

KS: What is best thing about working at the .

RYT: The best thing about working at the  are the rabbinical dialogues with Rabbi Levy and the other Rabbinic Coordinators and the camaraderie of the rest of the staff.

One of our new אברכים - אב בחכמה רך בשנים, Reb Yakov combines halachic knowledge, technical expertise and an amicable unassuming personality, which has contributed to his popularity amongst his peers.

KS: How would you describe the כ today?

RYT: The כ is a professional and well-oiled machine, with a Rav HaMachshir and rabbonim who are not afraid to stand up for their principles even if there may be a monetary loss.

KS: Tell us something interesting about you that we don't know.

RYT: As I previously mentioned, Kehilla Kosher was my father's hechsher. When I was younger, pre Bar Mitzvah, I participated as a tag-along in upper management meetings. I also did rudimentary hashgacha work when needed (after my bar mitzvah) since I was on-site, including grape juice concentrate, hafrashas challah and light kashering.

KS: Can you share an interesting experience that you had while working at the כ?

RYT: Many people are aware that products made in China need extra supervision. I was once at a facility and I was talking to the owner who was from China. He told me, without prompting, that everything made in China is fake and he won't use anything from there. When I pressed him about the rice there he responded that they put in chemicals to make it white and look nice. When he goes to visit he only stays a few days because he won't eat anything. How much more so when it comes to kashrus!

What Other People Say Rabbi Yakov Teichman

“ One of our new אברכים - אב בחכמה רך בשנים, Reb Yakov combines halachic knowledge, technical expertise and an amicable unassuming personality, which has contributed to his popularity amongst his peers.

His proficient handling of the infestation committee has greatly enhanced our kashrus standards.”

Rabbi Don Yoel Levy

Kashrus Administrator

“ Rabbi Teichman is a blessing from G-d for כ Kosher for many reasons. Above all of is the way he approaches his work - delving into details, thinking about all possibilities, and dealing with complex situations using his knowledge in Torah and real yiras shomayim.”

Rabbi Kalman Weinfeld

Director of Food Service

“ Rabbi Yakov Teichman's vast knowledge of halacha and technical understanding of its applications have been a trusted resource to myself and the entire rabbinic team at כ Kosher. I look forward to our shared drive to Brooklyn from New Jersey.”

Rabbi Levi Y. Schapiro

Rabbinic Coordinator

Compiled by Dina Fraenkel

Why Defile the Oil?

When the miracle of Chanukah is described in the Talmud (Shabbos 21b), the Sages clearly indicate that the Greeks intentionally defiled the oil in the Bais Hamikdash, rather than using or destroying it. What was their motive for rendering the oil impure?

As the Greeks expanded their empire, their goal was not to destroy the existing populations. Rather, the Greek goal was to Hellenize the conquered nations, assimilating them to Greek culture. As we say in *VeAl HaNissim*, the Greeks wanted us to “forget Your Torah and violate the decrees of Your will” – to remove G-d from our learning and rituals. The Greeks wanted to relegate Torah and mitzvos to academia and culture, as opposed to an expression of G-d’s will and our connection to Him.

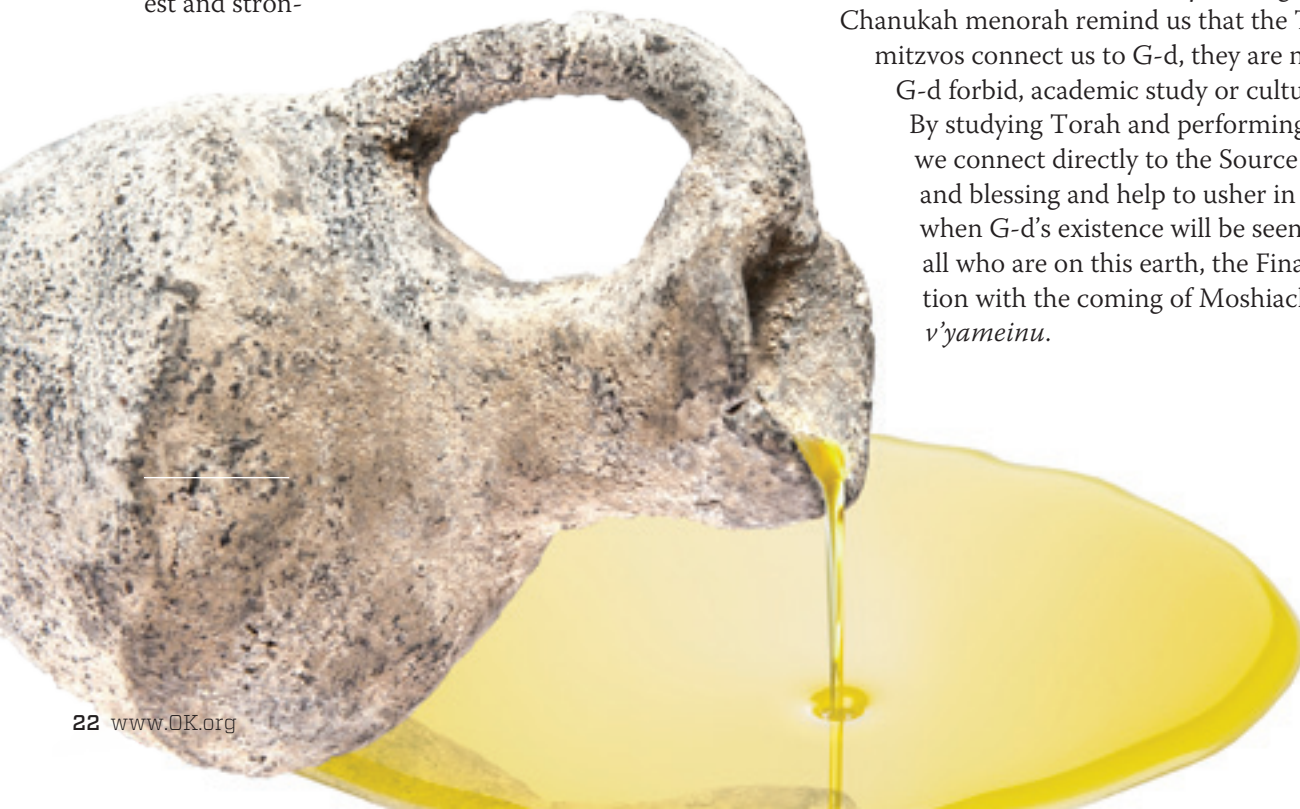
When the Greeks defiled the oil and made it impure, their goal was to erase G-dliness from the lights of the menorah. They had no opposition to the physical light of the menorah – actually, they WANTED it to remain a purely physical light, as opposed a light permeated with holiness and purity.

The Jews fought back against the removal of G-d from Judaism by fighting with mesiras nefesh, a tiny band of fighters against the largest and stron-

gest army in the world. The Maccabees were willing to give up everything, including their lives, to keep G-d in the equation.

The one remaining pure bottle of oil, bearing the seal of the Kohen Gadol, is the quintessential symbol of mesiras nefesh. According to the Rambam (*Hilchos Klei HaMikdash* 5:7), the *Kohen Gadol* could never leave Yerushalayim. The word Yerushalayim (ירושלים) is made up of two words – *yirah* (ירא) and *shaleim* (שלם) (together they mean “complete awe”). The *Kohen Gadol*, who never leaves Yerushalayim, never ceases to have this complete awe of G-d. Each of us, every single Jew, can achieve this same level of complete awe. Each of us has this single bottle of pure oil within us, waiting to be found. We may not discover it and connect to G-d on this level in our ordinary lives, but when we face a challenge, like the Maccabees, we hunt deep inside ourselves to find this pure, sealed bottle, the complete awe. It is when we discover and attain this level that we achieve complete power over even the biggest foe, transcending all earthly limitations.

The miracle of the one pure bottle of oil, which lasted for eight days and nights, symbolizes the Jews eternal connection to G-d, which can never be severed, no matter who or what the enemy. The lights of the Chanukah menorah remind us that the Torah and mitzvos connect us to G-d, they are not merely, G-d forbid, academic study or cultural rituals. By studying Torah and performing mitzvos, we connect directly to the Source of all life and blessing and help to usher in the time when G-d’s existence will be seen clearly by all who are on this earth, the Final Redemption with the coming of Moshiach *bimheira v’yameinu*.



Fire & Light

The topic of Chanukah does not have its own tractate in the Talmud, rather it is included in Maseches Shabbos. Why doesn't Chanukah have its own complete tractate, from beginning to "end", like Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkos, Purim, and Pesach? The students of the Baal Shem Tov explain that the essence of Chanukah is learning **Hashem's** Torah and doing **Hashem's** mitzvos, which will not be complete until Moshiach comes.

The Yomim Tovim are usually celebrated in very physical, tangible ways. On Pesach we **eat** matzah, on Sukkos we **sit** in a sukkah and **shake** a lulav and esrog, on Simchas Torah we **dance** with the Torah. It's only on Chanukah that we celebrate with intangible, almost spiritual, symbols - fire and light. According to the Baal HaTanya, this is because the Greeks fought against our fire and our spirituality, as it says, *"ner mitzvah V'Torah ohr"*.



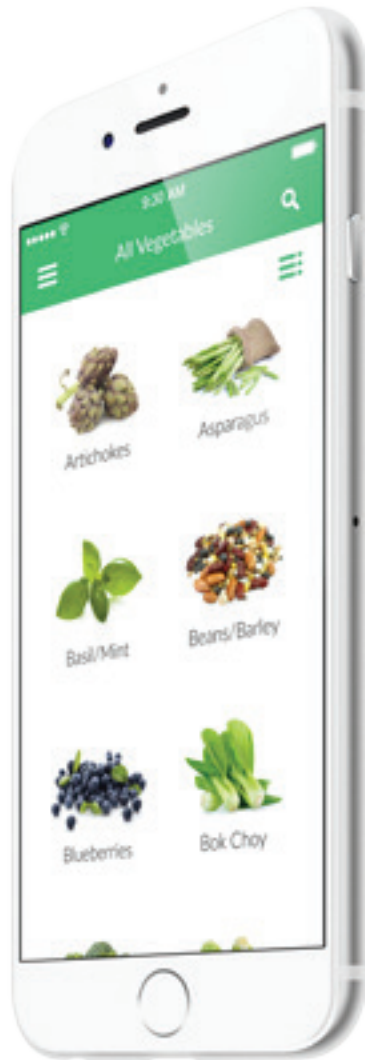
WHERE DO WE FIND A HINT IN THE TORAH ABOUT CHANUKAH?

IN THE STORY OF YEHUDAH AND TAMAR, ABOUT THREE MONTHS AFTER THEIR ENCOUNTER, YEHUDAH SAID, "TAKE HER OUT TO BE BURNED." ABOUT THREE MONTHS AFTER ROSH HASHANAH, WE TAKE THE CANDLES OUT TO BE BURNED. THE TALMUD RELATES THAT RABI YEHUDAH RULES THAT IF A STORE KEEPER KINDLED CHANUKAH CANDLES OUTSIDE HIS STOREFRONT AND A LADEN DONKEY CAUGHT FIRE, THE STOREKEEPER IS NOT LIABLE, BECAUSE HE HAS PERMISSION FROM THE TORAH TO TAKE OUT THE CANDLES AND LIGHT THEM ON CHANUKAH.

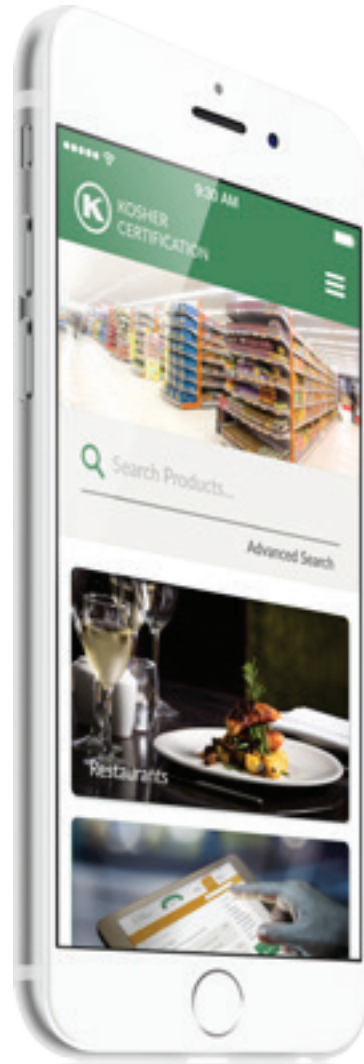
THE IMREI EMES OF GUR SAYS THAT ABOUT THREE MONTHS AFTER CHANUKAH, ONCE AGAIN, WE NEED TO "TAKE OUT TO BE BURNED", BUT THIS TIME IT IS THE CHOMETZ AND ONCE AGAIN ITS RABI YEHUDAH IN THE TALMUD THAT RULES THAT THE ONLY WAY TO REALLY DESTROY CHOMETZ IS THROUGH BURNING IT.

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Wishing you a Happy Chanukah!

