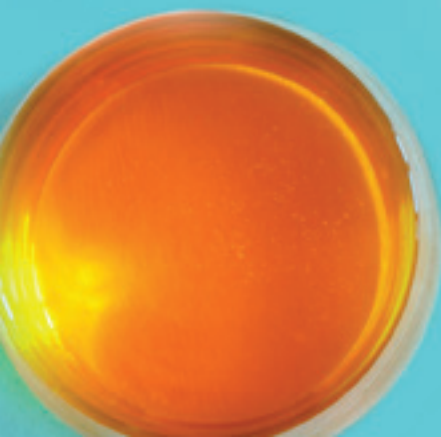


KOSHER SPIRIT

תשרי תשע"ח
TISHREI 5778

CERTIFIED SOUL NUTRITION



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Dear Reader,

As Rosh Hashanah rapidly approaches and we start a new year, I struggle to keep track of all that has transpired in the past year. It was a year full of reevaluations, updates, and improvements to our workflow and systems.

With © Kosher satellite offices strategic locations all over the world, it is incumbent upon us to actively review protocol and standards to ensure the same high standards of kosher are implemented throughout the world, even though we are all constantly connected through the latest technologies. In addition to hundreds of phone calls and video conferences, many of our rabbis and staff have been shuttling back and forth, from California to Israel, to ensure transparency and the quality of the certification in which so many of you place your trust.

Here at *Kosher Spirit*, we are starting the New Year with a new series called Your Kosher Kitchen, with the intent of conveying the applied, practical kashrus of all the kitchen appliances that we use on a regular basis and the possible kosher ramifications, one appliance at a time. We hope you will find it informative and we will start with the center (and hottest part) of the kitchen – the oven.

Color your world with an in depth look at the amazing world of food coloring by Rabbi Bentzion Chanowitz and read a fascinating account of kosher supervision in the IDF, based on an interview with our own Food Service Rabbinic Coordinator, Rabbi Kalman Weinfeld. We also bring you a spotlight on a unique wine company, Wyldewood Cellars, and their award winning elderberry wines, which, although it cannot be used for Kiddush, will be a perfect complement to your Simchas Beis Hashoeva or Simchas Torah table.

Kosher certification certainly requires an intense setup to ensure that things will all be done according to halacha. Equally as important is constant review and a monitoring system of checks and balances to ensure kosher consistency, which is what Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are all about. It seems to me like its Rosh Hashanah in this office all year round, and as time goes by the years are passing faster and faster.

Wishing you and your family a *gut gebentched yohr* and *k'siva v'chasima tovah, l'shanah tovah u'mesukah*.

Rabbi Chaim Fogelman

Editor in Chief

KOSHER SPIRIT Tishrei 5778

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Share Your Spirit

Dear Rabbi,
Thank you so much for being
so thoughtful with your gift
of such special Matzah.
Kee has always spoken so highly
of you and I would be honored
to meet you.
Happy Passover -
All the best
Flavella



Mitzva's Tefillin at Our Daily Bread with an employee, Oliver. First time since his bar mitzvah!

A beautiful note of thanks from our Mitzva Matzah Campaign!



Share Your Spirit

Dear Kosher Spirit,

Please let me know how I can receive the 'Vegetable Checking Guide'. I especially found the Pesach 5777 issue very interesting and helpful. The question regarding disposable pans requiring tevillas keilim was good to learn. Information regarding root vegetables was well done, informative, and important to know. Checking lettuce! Clear, concise, terrific! And great recipes! The tribute to Rabbi B. Levy, zt"l, was beautifully done.

Thank you. Well done. Kol hakavod!

J. Zwick

Dear Kosher Spirit,

Thank you for taking the time and energy to mail the Kosher Housekeeper book, especially Erev Yom Tov - such a busy time of year. It provided a great and thorough read amongst family and friends; we learned a lot. Tizkee l'mitzvot v'shanim rabot as I continue to turn my house back to chametz!

Ronni K

Dear Kosher Spirit,

LOVE the veggie checking guide - clear, simple, best thing on checking vegetables yet! I have a lot of things on veggie checking, but this beats them all!

Chaya S.

Dear Kosher Spirit,

We love your magazine and in our Chabad house we find it a very useful tool of spreading Yiddishkeit. Our visitors enjoy the interesting and practical content found in every publication. I was wondering if it would be possible to have 10 copies of every future magazine sent to our Chabad house so we can give out to others.

Thank you in advance!

Raizel N.

BEETS

According to some customs, beets are one of the many simanim for Rosh Hashanah. The Hebrew word for beet is *selek* סלק, which resembles the Hebrew word *sileik* (remove), so the beet represents the prayer that our sins and adversaries will be removed from our midst in the coming year.



1 cup of cooked beets contains **34%** of the recommended daily value of **folate, an essential vitamin that protects against birth defects and enables the body to produce DNA, RNA and metabolize amino acids**

Betalain, the unique anti-oxidant abundant in beets, may help protect against certain cancers

Beets are an **anti-inflammatory** food and may help lessen the effects of chronic inflammatory conditions in the body

Betaine and **choline** found in beets have been found to play a role in **balancing cholesterol and lowering blood pressure**

Lutein and zeaxanthin, two anti-oxidants found in beets, play a strong role in protecting against eye diseases, such as **macular degeneration and cataracts**

Beets are known as natural **blood cleansers** and are great for detoxification

Beets cleanse the digestive tract and help naturally **slow aging**

To retain as much nutrition as possible, **steam beets for 15 minutes** or less

Elderberries have been a companion to man since the stone age and grow wild in the temperature zones around the world.

They are a dark purple berry with many naturally occurring nutritional substances: Anthocyanins, Quercetin, Rutin, Polyphenols, Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids and are naturally low in sugar.



Interview with Christine Cunningham, Social Media Manager

KS: Tell us a bit about how you got started with Elderberry Wines.

CC: Wyldeewood Cellars was originally created as a way to make the family farm in Eastern Kansas more profitable. Dr. John Brewer, one of the founders had been a wine-making hobbyist since grad school and after a friendly suggestion by Mike Martini of Louis Martin Winery in Napa Valley, CA, Dr. John started a year long process of market research before setting on making Elderberry Wines. He then spent 8 years and tried over 200 formulas - trying to make a high quality wine from elderberries. There were over 40 acres of wild elderberries just sitting on the family farm just waiting for the right idea to come along. Dr. John sent a bottle from the final batch to Mike, and Mike took it to a Napa Valley Wine Makers meeting. They loved the wine and said it definitely should be marketed.

KS: What sets Wyldeewood wines apart from other non-grape wines and beverages?

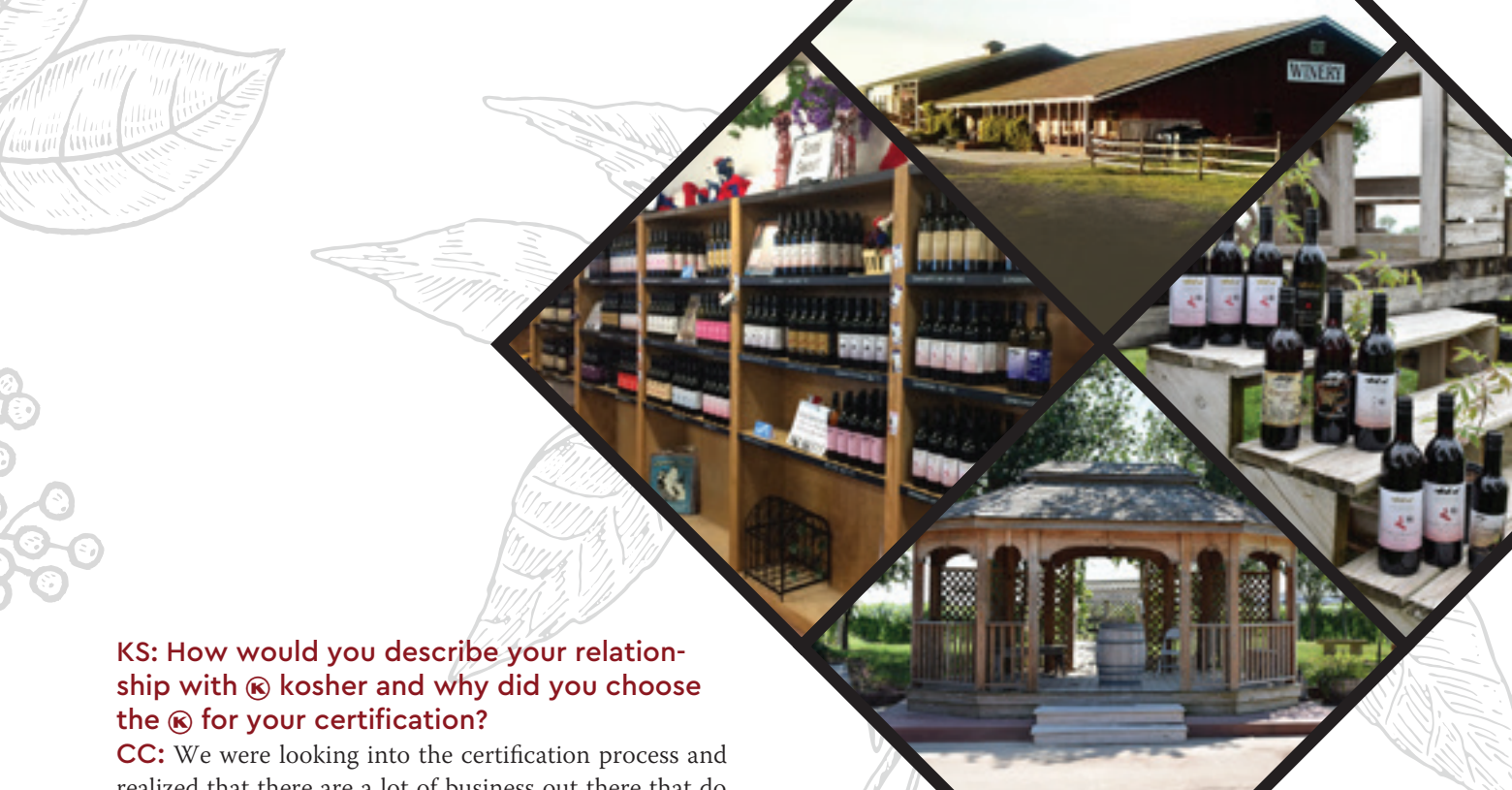
CC: Wyldeewood Cellars blends traditional wine making techniques, including oak aging, with the latest scientific advances, and modifies both for the particular berry to produce international award-winning wines from native fruit. We believe that taste is the most important quality in wine, but also understand that everyone has different tastes. We are lucky to have two Professional International Wine Judges on staff, Dr. John Brewer and his nephew

Shawn. Producing our wines in a selection of sweetness levels provides each of us the exact blend of fruit, tannin, and sweetness that appeals to your individual tastes.




Until Wyldeewood Elderberry Wines came along, the only commercially available Elderberry Wine was actually a Grape Wine flavored with artificial elderberry flavoring. We take pride in making the highest quality wines from the real fruits, berries, and juices. Our nearly 600 International and National competition medals and titles back that up. Our Elderberry Wines go from the very dry to the very sweet; Spiced (the official wine of the Olympic Village in 2002 Winter Olympics and “Best Non-Grape Wine in North and Latin America”). We now have a line of Meads – a honey based wine – as well.

KS: When did you get kosher certified and why did you decide to pursue certification?

CC: We were certified in November of 2016. We decided to pursue certification because we were already using all natural fruits and ingredients that were kosher. Through market research we saw that there were not many options in the Kosher Wine Market. Real Elderberry was not currently available to kosher homes, it was commonly a Grape Wine made with Elderberry Flavoring. Seeing as we were already using kosher ingredients we reached out to members in the local Jewish community to find out how to start the process.




KS: How would you describe your relationship with  kosher and why did you choose the  for your certification?

CC: We were looking into the certification process and realized that there are a lot of business out there that do kosher certification; not knowing which the best was, we went to a local rabbi and asked his opinion. He suggested  Kosher. Working with  Kosher has been rather easy, a very positive experience, and we would definitely recommend  Kosher to others that are seeking to obtain kosher certification. They helped us thru every step and continue to support our efforts with new ideas and constant positive interactions.

KS: What has been the reaction by distributors and customers to your kosher certification?

CC: There has been a lot of excitement and increased marketing. Our Customers who do not follow the kosher standard know the quality that being kosher certified brings to our products. Our distributors are very happy to have that certification to use in marketing our products to the kosher community. It is opening new markets and new customers for us every day.

KS: What do you have in store for the future of Wyldewood Wines?

CC: We will continue to grow and develop new non-grape wines that we can produce according to kosher protocol. During  Kosher's most recent visit, the rabbi suggested having all of our non-grape wines certified kosher, so we are working to make that happen. We want this certification to be a great opportunity not only for Wyldewood Cellars, but also kosher communities who enjoy wine.

Visit www.wyldewoodcellars.com to find out more and to purchase their award winning,  Kosher certified wines. 

A few words from Rabbinic Coordinator, Rabbi Yoni Rappaport

A good working relationship is integral in order for a kosher program to be properly implemented at a facility. Thankfully working with Dr. John Brewer at Wyldewood Cellars has been a pleasure. Apart from his cooperation with kosher he is also extremely knowledgeable in food science in general, and is always available to share it.

Our kosher program is not only focused on what is kosher but also on what is not kosher. Wyldewood Cellars produces wines from different fruits, with about 5% of the production being from grape that isn't kosher. The grape wine is produced on a different floor than the kosher production, and is produced in dedicated fermentation and aging tanks that are clearly marked.

The mashgiach knows ahead of time when the grape wine will be produced. He inspects all the tanks to confirm that no grape is produced in kosher tanks, and that no kosher product is being produced in grape tanks. Additionally he will review their production records, which are kept for the Alcohol & Tobacco Tax & Trade Bureau (TTB). These inspections will happen throughout the year, not only during the grape season.

PLEASE NOTE: Elderberry wine cannot be used for Kiddush and the blessing recited over it is *Shehakol*, though it can still be enjoyed (responsibly) for a *L'chaim*.



Your Kosher Kitchen

All About Ovens

By Rabbi Levi Schapiro
Rabbinic Coordinator at OK Kosher



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

	Oven	Clean		Unclean	
	Pan	used < 24 hrs	used > 24 hrs	used < 24 hrs	used > 24 hrs
Any Uncovered Batter	Fleishig				
Uncovered Liquid Batter	Parve (or new)				
	Milchig				Oven used < or > 24 hrs
Dry Batter or Covered Pan	Any				

food pan oven eaten with milk kosher *bidieved not kosher

**According to Ashkenazic custom. However one need not wait 6 hours to eat dairy.



I cooked meat and pareve at the same time in the oven. Can I eat the pareve item with milk?

- If both are completely covered, yes.
- If the meat was double wrapped, there is room to allow it. If not (although they may be covered), there is a concern that some of the steam will escape and therefore it is not permitted.



I accidentally cooked dairy lasagna in a fleishig oven. What do I do with the food and my oven?

If the pan was completely covered it is kosher bidieved, otherwise the food may not be eaten and the oven and pan must be kashered. However, one may be lenient and kasher with a lower temp then if it was treif (i.e. 500°F is fine, one does not need to self-clean).



What do I need to do in order to cook pareve in my fleishig oven and keep it truly pareve? How do I bake challah in a fleishig oven and keep it pareve?

Make sure the oven is completely clean and either turn the oven to the highest temperature for 2 hours or allow the oven to remain off for 24 hours. The pan must be pareve as well.



How do I kasher my oven?

According to most poskim, a self-clean cycle is sufficient to kasher an oven. If an oven does not have this option, a high temperature blow torch must be applied to the entire oven surface until it becomes red hot. Some poskim also allow kashering by cleaning the oven with chemicals, waiting 24 hours, and turning the oven to the highest temperature for 2 hours.



Can I open the oven on Shabbos if it's on?

Yes, but make sure the light will not turn on and that you remove all food before closing the oven.



Can I put anything into the oven on Shabbos?

No.



I have 2 ovens in one unit. Can I use one for milk and one for meat?

Yes.



KEEPING KOSHER IN THE IDF


“AN ARMY MARCHES ON ITS STOMACH.” THIS SAYING, ATTRIBUTED TO NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, IS AS TRUE TODAY AS IT WAS OVER 200 YEARS AGO. IN THE ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES, FOOD IS A TOP PRIORITY. THE MEALS FOR THE SOLDIERS ARE DESIGNED BY DOCTORS AND NUTRITIONISTS TO KEEP THE SOLDIERS STRONG AND HEALTHY.

For a Jewish soldier in the IDF, keeping kosher would seem to be quite simple. The Israeli army is kept strictly kosher and its kitchens are carefully color coded, with two full

sets of dishes. Even new recruits who are not familiar with Hebrew, or those who are not kosher observant are able to understand where things go. Yet the question of kosher in



the IDF isn't as straightforward as one might think, and depending whom you speak to, you might receive a variety of answers.

When I interviewed former lone soldiers Zalmey and Josh, they told me that it is not hard to keep basic kosher in the Israeli army and all the dairy is Cholev Yisroel. However, if you have stricter standards, you may have a more difficult time. According to Rabbi Kalman Weinfeld, current Food Service director at  Kosher, who served as a kitchen mashgiach in the IDF Air Force from 1992-1995, it's not so simple. The equipment in the kitchens are not suitable for those who keep the highest standards of kashrus. While Rabbi Weinfeld oversaw the kitchens, he himself kept to a stricter standard of kosher and never once ate anything cooked while in the army. He had his own dishes and cutlery and made his own salads, due to shemittah concerns, and food. "I lived on bread and soft cheeses for 6 months while in basic training," Weinfeld said. He explained that the year of Shemittah (1993-94) can also add complications to eating meals with your fellow soldiers. There is a "*heter mechirah*" in the country, a loophole announcing that "all land in Israel belongs to the non-Jews" which allows people to eat from the fruits and vegetables grown

without being concerned about shemittah. However, many frum Jews don't use the *heter mechirah*, which makes eating in the army challenging during that time period.

Corporal Zalmey, a lone soldier from New Jersey, who served for 2 years, had a handful of soldiers who were ultra-orthodox and kept to a stricter standard of kosher in his division. Their unit made sure to have special meat with an approved hechsher on hand that these soldiers could eat. If this wasn't available, the soldiers would eat tuna or find another protein. He told me that it really depended who your commanding officer happened to be. Obviously, if your commanding officer is one who is more religious, they might make more of an effort to ensure their soldiers kashrus needs were met, though there were times when they could not accommodate the soldiers.

It also depends on the size and location of the army base. On the borders of Lebanon or Syria, it is rather difficult to set up a proper kitchen in the middle of the desert and they make do with makeshift tent kitchens. During the 6 Day War and the Yom Kippur War, thousands of soldiers on the border were fed from these small makeshift kitchens! In these types of scenarios, keeping a strictly kosher kitchen is quite difficult. While every base has different meals and menus, generally speaking, the larger the base, the likelihood that there will be a higher-ranking official such as a Lieutenant or Captain increases, which would mean access to a variety of better foods.

Every army base has a mashgiach who is responsible for the kosher status of the kitchen. They work together with the kitchen manager and the kitchen "jobniks" (non-combat soldiers). Combat Soldiers will also have kitchen duty (this applies to the US army as well), where they help prepare the meals and do clean up. The cooks in the kitchen are always Jewish but not always Shomer Shabbos, so they are not allowed to turn on any fires. The mashgiach and the more religious

soldiers must pay attention to these details to ensure that it's as kosher as possible.

While combining religion and the army is very difficult, many soldiers have figured out ways to make it happen. Even something as simple as davening could be complicated because every minute of the day is accounted for down to an exact schedule. While you can generally pray during morning chores, sometimes they need to get up at 4 am to daven shacharis!

Shabbos in the army, regardless of religious background is always a special and holy time for all the soldiers. Lavish meals are served, and attendance is mandatory. The rabbi on base makes kiddush for all the soldiers (no wine, only grape juice is served). Soldiers dressed in their army uniforms with guns in their lap join together to sing traditional Shabbos *zemiros*. The best food is served during this time, including beef and, sometimes, soda. Sergeant Josh from Kentucky related to me that in his experience there was no official Shabbos morning breakfast but chocolate milk was a special treat the soldiers received and the soldiers would literally hoard this drink because it was so special for them. For Shabbos lunch, a traditional pareve cholent is served, which the soldiers call "choont". Josh told me that the first time he experienced "choont" he thought the egg in the cholent (as is traditional in a Sephardic cholent) was a potato and when he bit into it he got a nice surprise!

Josh explained that you will always know what kind of day it will be de-



JOSH EXPLAINED THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS KNOW WHAT KIND OF DAY IT WILL BE DEPENDING ON THE FOOD YOU ARE SERVED.

pending on the food you are served.

Shnitzel (or other protein) meant it was going to be a good or easier training day, while a carb-loading day meant it was going to be a difficult training day or a mission. A large dinner around 7 pm meant the soldiers would have a *masa* (journey) planned for early morning. This journey would generally include a very long hike, which could be up to 75 km (46 miles)! Every 10 km the soldiers would get a break, and the food would be very light, such as a peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Meat would be too heavy on the body, while dairy would cause vomiting. After the *masa*, a large meal would be served.

In Rabbi Weinfeld's experience in the Air Force, he feels that food is more than just making sure the soldiers are fed in order to do their job.

Rabbi Weinfeld always tried to be the one who served the main course, ensuring that soldiers who were hungry received a second portion, even when the rule was only one portion per soldier. The Air Force also had a policy that there had to be a soup served at every meal. However, the soldiers generally didn't like it and it was hardly eaten. Rabbi Weinfeld began a personal campaign to encourage the soldiers to eat the soup by singing a chant that was once popular on an Israeli children's television show about eating healthy. "*Tochal Marak, Tihiyeh Chazak*" – If you eat soup, you will be strong. Rabbi Weinfeld sang this song with the soldiers and it turned into a joke throughout the entire base, but it worked and more and more soldiers ate the soup!

A soldier once asked Rabbi Weinfeld why he placed such importance on the soldiers eating. Why did he care so much? Rabbi Weinfeld explained that growing up, his mother always taught him that the many guests that would come for Shabbos meals weren't guests, their family just got bigger for Shabbos. He explained that the soldiers are all like his family and he cared about them. He then taught the soldier the proper brocha for the soup.

The story continued three years later when Rabbi Weinfeld found himself lost on the way to Jerusalem for an official government meeting. Rabbi Weinfeld called Israel's information line to find the exact location. After a few minutes on the phone with the operator discussing the address of where he needed to go, the male operator says, "Rabbi Kalman - before you hang up, *Tochal Marak Tihiyeh Chazak!*" It was the very same soldier who always made a brocha before eating soup after his encounter with Rabbi Weinfeld.

Rabbi Weinfeld imparted to me that being in the army while working in the kitchen was more than just the

kashrus laws; it was also about connecting with people and each person he met was treated with respect.

Soldiers Josh and Zalmy have similar experiences. While our interviews were about keeping kosher in the IDF and what that entailed, something they were both enthusiastic about was how soldiers were treated and cared for through gifts of food. For example, Lone Soldiers are given care packages of food during holidays when the rest of the soldiers go home to family. There are special dinners and events to make sure the Lone Soldiers feel at home and are not lonely. Soldiers that work on the Iron Dome are often given gifts of food from nearby kibbutzim. For Shabbos, kibbutz members go to their local army base and bring food gifts to the soldiers. Lone Soldiers will often have an "adoptive mother" who help them get food and other supplies they need.

Josh was once posted at a dangerous outpost for a checkpoint. He fondly recalls how chareidi rabbis, along with their young children, would drive around giving out treats and donuts on Chanukah. Through music and dancing and talking with the soldiers, they made them feel part of their family and appreciated for their service.

The lessons I took away from my conversations were twofold. First, even while living in the Holy Land and serving in the IDF with a full kosher kitchen, it is still of utmost importance to pay attention to what you are being fed, from the hechsher, kind of food, or even time of year. Certainly, living in exile, care must be taken even in places that appear completely kosher. Secondly, the beauty and community of Am Yisrael, always sharing and helping a fellow Jew, caring and supporting each member of our extra-large family.



BUTTERNUT SQUASH, APPLE & GINGER SOUP



By DEVORAH BACKMAN

Joy of Kosher Magazine

Subscribe at

www.joyofkosher.com/

subscribe

- 1 diced onion**
- 1 chopped butternut squash**
- 4 chopped apples**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ¼ teaspoon pepper**
- 1 teaspoon cumin**
- ½ teaspoon coriander**
- ½ inch fresh ginger**
- 4 cups stock or water**

START by sautéing a diced onion in a large pot. When onions are translucent, add one chopped butternut squash and 4 chopped apples. Sauté for about 10 minutes or until squash and apples are golden and begin to brown. Add 1 teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper, 1 teaspoon cumin and ½ teaspoon coriander. Add a ½ inch of ginger, either whole or diced, depending on how much ginger flavor you like. Adding a whole piece and removing it after simmering will impart a more subtle flavor; dicing it into the soup will give it a powerful taste. Add 4 cups of liquid (chicken stock, vegetable stock, or water) and simmer 30 minutes, or until very soft. Purée in a food processor or with a hand blender. To garnish, either chop an apple and toss with a little lemon juice, or cut ginger into thin matchsticks and fry into crispy ginger chips.

KOSHER COLORINGS

By Rabbi BenZion Chanowitz



On Yom Kippur the Kohen Gadol would hang a red piece of wool in the Bais Hamikdash. Once the wool turned white they knew our sins were forgiven...

Human beings have been tinkering with food for thousands of years. Salt, sugar and various spices are routinely added to improve taste. Some ingredients are added to preserve foods, such as salt which helps preserve fish and meat. Salt is also used to extract blood. The possuk says in Iyov 6:6: "Can meat be eaten raw without salt?" People also learned the art of pickling and canning in order to preserve foods. Later on, simple chemical changes were introduced in order to produce fermented wine out from grapes, dairy products from milk, fluffy baked goods out from flour and water, and so on.

As our knowledge, experience and needs grew, we learned how to upgrade the quality of our prepared food. During the last century, the world made dramatic strides in food preparation, allowing the production of better quality food in greater quantities that remain safe and healthy for a longer period of time.

One of the catalysts for this change was mass migration to cities and the decline of the family farm. Prior to the development of large cities, most people lived and worked on a family farm, or in a town that was in close proximity to multiple farms. Consequently, food did not need to be preserved for long times and the quality was readily noticed by observing the fresh picked produce. Today, most of the food in our grocery stores travel significant distances before reaching our local shop, and are picked or prepared long before consumption. Therefore, the consumer does not observe the growing process at all; they rely heavily on how the food looks and feels when we examine it to determine quality and freshness. Since there is much more competition in today's retail food market, the suppliers work hard to present their offerings in the best possible light.

Accordingly, the need for kosher supervision has become more acute. While years ago fresh fruits, vegetable and spices

were used to enhance the color of prepared foods, today a vast variety of both natural and artificial colorants are used in the products on our supermarket shelves. Even though, sometimes, only minute amounts of some of these ingredients are used, they still require supervision. There is a famous Teshuvah HaRashba (Cheilek Gimmel, Siman 214) that says that if a non-kosher ingredient was added intentionally, it does not become nullified, even if we cannot discern its taste, because it has made a noticeable change in the food.

Food coloring is usually added in order to make food look healthy and appetizing. We all know that there are natural variations in the colors of fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, during travel, exposure to sun and changing temperatures, the colors change slightly. Yet, most consumers will only buy the best looking foods and discard anything that looks off color. The market responds in kind by finding all kinds of ways to make sure that the product looks perfect. Though the customer's expectations may not be realistic, food coloring is added in order to live up to their standards.

We have also come to associate certain foods with corresponding colors, even though these colors may not be accurate. Though cola sodas are not really brown and hard cheeses or margarine are not really yellow, we alter their colors in order to live up to the customers perceived expectations.

It is a well-known dictum that "we taste our food with our eyes" as much as with our taste buds! Food processors are keenly aware of this, and they alter the colors accordingly.

There are two types of food colors:

1. Artificial colors (or Government Certified colors):

These colors require health certification, as they come from petrochemicals (chemicals that come from petroleum) or coal tar. The particular color is derived from chemically altered ingredients, such as erythrosine or tartrazine. These ingredients are generally considered kosher as long as they are processed on kosher machinery.

Artificial colors are not always artificial, but are still called "artificial" due to FDA regulations which require that even natural colors are listed as artificial if they are used outside of their natural occurrence (i.e. beet juice in fruit snacks).

2. Natural colors (or Exempt from Government Certification):

These do not require FDA certification, but may require additional kashrus supervision. Natural colors come from either the plant or animal kingdom, and may include grape skin or insects.

Furthermore, some foods require oil soluble coloring. In order to change water soluble coloring to oil soluble,

COMMONLY USED FOOD COLORANTS

(Note: Even when these colors come from kosher raw materials, we cannot accept these as kosher without the guidance of an experienced kashrus supervisor.)

NATURAL COLORS:

Curcumin (E100): A bright yellow chemical produced from plants, mainly from turmeric.

Annatto (E160b): A red-orange dye made from the seed of the achiote tree which usually grows in the tropical regions in the Americas. Though it is red, it is often used in yellow orange colorings. This seed is widely used in Mexico and in the Caribbean.

Carotenoids: Organic pigments produced by plants and algae. There are over 600 types of carotenoids that produce a range of colors from violet to green, though they are generally deep yellow, orange and red. Alpha, beta and gamma carotenoids are all carotenoids. They may be found in carrots, corn, egg yolks and bananas, as well as in various hickory trees.

Chlorophyll: Found in green leafy vegetable. It produces Natural Green 3 and E141.

Anthocyanins (flavonoids): Odorless but flavorful. They are red, purple, black or blue and are found in blueberries, raspberries, black rice and black soybeans.

Betanin (E162): A red (glycoside) food dye (bright bluish red to violet blue) that comes from beets. This dye weakens when subjected to light, heat and oxygen. It is therefore used in products with short shelf lives, in frozen foods, or in dry products.

Carmine: Made by boiling dried insects in water to extract the carminic acid. This solution is then treated with alum to produce the crimson red color. Around seventy thousand bugs are needed to produce one pound of carmine. (All mainstream kosher agencies prohibit the use of carmine (Natural Red #4) in kosher products.)

Elderberry Juice (E163): Derived from the elderberry fruit. It is a flavonoid called cyanidin, with colors ranging from red to purple to blue.

Lycopene (E160d): A bright red carotene dye that comes from red fruits and vegetables like tomatoes, carrots, watermelon and papaya.

Paprika (E 160c): A ground spice, made from air-dried varieties of red pepper. It comes in red, orange and yellow.

ARTIFICIAL COLORS:

Erythrosine (E127) [FD&C Red No. 3]: A derivative of fleuron, which is made from coal tar. Its color is cherry pink, and it is commonly used in candies, cake decorating gels and to color pistachio shells. This ingredient is being curtailed because of health concerns.

Allura Red (E129) [FD&C Red no. 40]: Comes from naphthalene or coal tar.

Fast Green (E143) [FD&C Green no. 3]: Is used to color green peas, vegetables and jellies. It is hardly used because of its health concerns.

Brilliant Blue (E133) [FD&C Blue no. 1]: An organic compound that appears as a reddish blue powder. It comes from benzene and sulfuric acid. It can be combined with tartrazine to produce various shades of green.

Indigotene or Indigo Carmine (E132) [FD&C Blue no. 2]: A natural dye extracted from plant leaves. Its blue is similar to the color of blue jeans. While Indigo Carmine is blue when the pH level is 11.4, it turns yellow when the pH level is 13.

Quinoline Yellow (E104): A greenish yellow additive. It comes from carbon and dye (synthetic). It is permitted in America only for medicine and cosmetics (D&C Yellow 10), while it's permitted in Europe even for food.

Sunset Yellow (E110 and FD&C Yellow 6): A petroleum derived orange dye.

Tartrazine (E102) [FD&C Yellow no. 6]: A very common synthetic lemon yellow azo dye made from petroleum.

Carnosine (E122): is a synthetic red azo food dye, and is made from disodium salt. It is not used in foods in the US, because of concerns of ADHD, though it is permitted for certain foods in the E.U.

Ponceau 4R (E124): Also known as Cochineal Red A, it is a strawberry red dye in the azo family. It is permitted for food coloring in the E.U., but not in the US. It is synthetic and not made from the cochineal bug.

Patent Blue V (E131): A synthetic bluish dye made from sodium, calcium and magnesium salt. It is permitted in the E. U. and prohibited in the U.S.

Green S (E142): A green synthetic coal tar permitted in the E.U. and prohibited in the U.S.

These are the basic color dyes. All of these colors may be combined to create many different colors and hues, to create the colorful world that we live in today.

the food production process only gets more complex, and the need for competent kashrus supervision more acute, as food chemistry and technology rapidly advances.

it may require a medium (such as glycerol) which requires kosher supervision.

All of the ingredients that are found in food have a designated number in the European Union. The numbers E100-E175 are devoted to colors, with E102-E143 denoting artificial colors. In the United States, the natural ingredients are generally not listed, as they are considered acceptable to all by the government. The artificial ingredients have specific FD&C (approved for food, drug and cosmetics) numbers.

Are you yellow about food coloring?

Are you too scared to think about how colorings are made? Does it seem like a “mad science” experiment gone wrong?

Hashem created naturally grown fruit, vegetables, and flowers which sport a magnificent array of colors. They also include many types of smell, taste, and medicines, each miraculously blended together, so that it seems like one pure item. Yet, the perceived simplicity masks an amazing array of chemicals.

You see, scientists like to break everything apart, in order to figure out how it came together. They try to figure out which chemical produces its color, which its taste, and so on. Usually the colors are not pure, rather they are a mixture of various colors and hues, which makes the fruit so much more exciting. Scientists do not want the exciting, they would rather break down the colors and discern each separate hue.

Scientists devised ways in which to separate all of the different parts of the fruit, vegetables and plant life. The easiest way to separate is to grind up the colorful object into a powder, and to cook the item. This usually transfers the colors into the water, and the fruit is then filtered out.

At times, the color adheres to the fruit so strongly that it is impossible to remove. In that case, scientists have a wide array of options. They can squeeze the fruit and extract oil. Almost every object has oils inside it. They can also add some solvents in order to loosen these bonds and allow the colors to escape. Some of these solvents would be alcohol, acetic acid (vinegar), ammonia, hexane, etc. Many of these are poisonous if swallowed in full strength and in significant quantity, so after they are used to extract the color, the solvent is extracted and the product tested to determine the solvent has been removed.

Even so-called “natural colors” are not presented in their natural form; they are altered by using many chemicals or heavily concentrated. Thankfully, even natural colors go through strict testing before they can be deemed fit for human consumption. Some of the natural colors come from beta carotene and other carotenoids. These include sweet potatoes, pumpkins and carrots, which produce a deep red, yellow or orange color. Chlorophyll is the green found in many plants and it is used in lime or mint candy, ice cream and foods. Deep purple and blue come from grapes, blueberries and cranberries. The deep yellow color comes from turmeric, a spice that grows in India. Of course these colors can be mixed and re-mixed in an infinite number of combinations.

There is one little problem that I failed to mention – color can be produced from animals, too. Did you ever notice the beautiful deep red color in some strawberry flavored yogurts or cranberry juices? The color is often derived from the cochineal insect (a type of beetle). If you crush 70,000 of these bugs, you end up with one pound of carmine or red #4. Of course, this is not kosher according to mainstream hechsherim.

For many years, scientists have found that many of the same color producing chemicals found in plants and animals can also be isolated from ground minerals. They, too, are very complex and can be broken down and even combined in ways that produce new chemicals. Coal used to be one of the main sources of many of these color producing compounds, until it was proven to be unhealthy and was replaced with petroleum derivatives. Mineral based colorants are combined using a wide array of temperatures and distilling processes.

Although there are many options for “natural” colorants, most food producers prefer artificial colors because they are cheaper and more stable than natural colors, which tend to vary with age and storage conditions.

As you can see, the food production process only gets more complex, and the need for competent kashrus supervision more acute, as food chemistry and technology rapidly advances. While our grandmothers colored their food with berries and borscht, today’s products contain myriad natural and artificial colorants from hundreds of sources. While there will always be debate about the benefits and drawbacks of natural versus artificial colorants, the kosher consumer can rest assured that whatever they prefer, packaged goods bearing the ® symbol are prepared with ingredients and processes that adhere to the highest standard of kosher supervision. ®

Kosher GPS

Smartphone App Takes Guesswork Out of Kosher Travel

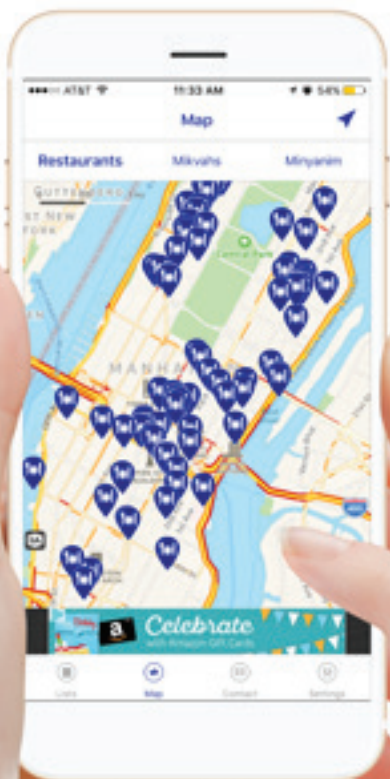


Kosher GPS, compatible with Android and iOS devices, provides location based info on kosher restaurants, local minyanim and mikvaos across the USA, Canada and Puerto Rico. The app is updated daily and includes access to menus, phone numbers and directions that sync through Waze, Apple or Google Maps. The app will also offer restaurant ratings and reviews in the near future and includes a search feature, enabling one to prepare for a trip in advance.

Kosher GPS now offers free promotions and discounts to restaurants in various locations across the country, with additional restaurants constantly. You simply have to present the highlighted promotion as it appears in the app to the restaurant in order to enjoy their discounts.

The developer has also created a new website called KosherDerech.com to make preparing for your trip even easier. The site enables you to put in a location and instantly get results for kosher places to eat, places to daven, mikvaos, activities and hotels in the area. The site will allow you to give reviews and update the site about activities and establishments you found interesting.

Consumers are encouraged to call each restaurant to verify the hashgacha and to consult with a rav to determine the reliability of hashgachos.



What are probiotics?

Rabbi Sholom Ber Hendel

Probiotics are live micro-organisms (bacteria) that provide many health benefits, especially for the digestive system. Probiotics are found in yogurts and other fermented products and are sold in liquid, powder, capsule, or tablet form.

HOW ARE PROBIOTICS MADE?

The micro-organism is isolated and tested for its health benefits, and is then allowed to grow by feeding the bacteria with nutrients. Typically, the main nutrients are sugars but bacteria is also fed with vitamins, minerals, proteins, and other additives. This process is known as fermentation. At the end of this process, the nutrients and water are removed from the bacteria, after which the bacteria is frozen. Often, before freezing, the bacteria is mixed with cryoprotectant (additives that protect the bacteria from damage caused by freezing). At this point, the probiotics require refrigeration/freezing.

Most companies utilize the freeze-drying process, during which the remaining water is evaporated from the frozen probiotic, resulting in a dried product which can be kept at room temperature.

The material is then milled into a powder and mixed with other strains so that the final product has multiple health benefits. The powder is mixed with additives and packaged as is, or filled into capsules. Alternatively, it can be mixed with water to make a liquid probiotic, or mixed with binders and pressed into tablets.

ARE PROBIOTICS KOSHER?

In the manufacturing of non-kosher certified probiotics, dairy and non-kosher proteins can be used. Also, the vitamins, minerals and other additives can come from a non-kosher certified source. The capsules are commonly made from non-kosher gelatin which are the cheapest capsules on the market.

In order for a probiotic to be certified as kosher, the kosher certifying agency ensures that all components are kosher. Of course, kosher capsules must be used; these are usually made of cellulose.

While in the past, most probiotics were made with dairy proteins, over the last few years more and more probiotics are produced with non-dairy ingredients but some of these products are made on dairy equipment and, therefore, certified as DE. Probiotics cannot be assumed to be pareve unless certified as such.

Coming Soon!
Excerpt from
David
Zaklikowski's
new book.



"I AM SURE HE WAS WELL AWARE OF THE FACT THAT HE WOULD NOT WIN POPULARITY CONTESTS IN MANY A PLACE, BUT THAT WAS NOT HIS ROLE; ENSURING KOSHER WAS."

According to folklore, the original formula for Dr. Pepper was cut in half and held in the vaults of two banks in Dallas, Texas. During his 1976 visit to the Dallas syrup plant, however, there was no hiding the ingredients of the sugary soft drink from Rabbi Levy.

"Kosher supervision today is rather complicated," Rabbi Levy told the New York Times. "We must know the highly secret formulas of synthetic flavorings, as well as who is selling and who is buying from whom."

In a profile written at the time, Dial-Clock Magazine dubbed Rabbi Levy "the Sherlock Holmes of the food industry." The "smiling, black-hatted, bearded rabbi is at home between large beverage-production equipment," the reporter wrote. "He pokes his fingers into pipes, smells the compounds and tastes other raw ingredients. Rabbi Levy's knowledge of food technology is current to the latest information on natural and synthetic flavorings and compounds, and he has considerable knowledge of beverage chemistry."

Dr. Pepper is the oldest of the major soft drink brands in the United States. It was originally developed and sold out of a Texas pharmacy, until the demand for it exceeded the pharmacy's production capacity. The drink gained international recognition at the 1904 World's Fair Exposition, the same expo that featured the hamburger bun and the ice cream cone.

The soda company first sought kosher supervision in 1970. At the time, Rabbi Levy was waging a campaign to educate kosher consumers about the need to know where a product's ingredients came from and how it was made before pronouncing it kosher.

Dial-Clock testified that Rabbi Levy made sure that anything the product came into contact with during production was kosher. "His inquiry is probably as comprehensive as one devised by any battery of inspectors."

He told the magazine that there were no ingredients that would make Dr. Pepper non-kosher, but the concern was that the raw ingredients might be made in the same place where non-kosher animal derivatives or meat and dairy products were manufactured. In such a case, the reporter wrote, the "preparation vessels and mixing tanks

are purged with boiling water, [a process] witnessed by Rabbi Levy."

In a 1975 profile, the New York Times reported on the OK's supervision of the General Foods Corporation, maker of Post cereals. "You have to have a thorough knowledge of food technology and food chemistry," Rabbi Levy told the paper. "If you are not up to date on these aspects, you can be most knowledgeable on Jewish law, but not qualified to do this work."

The rabbi lived in both worlds: in books of Jewish law and in consultation with the great rabbinical leaders of his generation, and in the world of food chemistry and manufacturing. "Those who are in the field," he wrote in 1985, "must be extremely knowledgeable in modern food technology. Changes in formulas are made every day."

Every Ingredient Rabbi Levy was a master of detail. From his small home office in the Borough Park neighborhood of Brooklyn, where with his wife, Thelma, he ran the financial division of the business, he created policies that applied to any company the OK certified, and he made every effort to ensure that they were followed. When they were not, kosher certification was immediately revoked.

"He had no patience for anything but the optimum standards on compliance and efficiency," recalled Ira Axelrod, a long-time kosher supervisor who accompanied Rabbi Levy on visits to factories and today works for the Star-K. "I am sure he was well aware of the fact that he would not win popularity contests in many a place, but that was not his role; ensuring kosher was."

His refusal to bend under pressure and his knowledge of the food industry earned Rabbi Levy the respect of the companies he worked with. But he also did his best to accommodate their needs whenever possible. "He didn't just

come down like a ton of bricks,” recalled his son Rabbi Don Yoel. “He would try to help them. He understood that you need to be tough, but you still need to remember that they are people.” If an ingredient turned out not to be kosher, the OK would work with the company to find an alternate supplier.

Rabbi Levy insisted on tracing every ingredient to its source, which was often a complicated endeavor. Processed food items sold in American stores may contain dozens, even hundreds, of ingredients. Many of these components are manufactured outside the United States, in dedicated factories that produce just one chemical or additive. Rabbi Levy became the first kosher supervisor to travel to all corners of the world on a kosher quest. “His seemingly endless energy, exhaustive investigations and phenomenal memory made him a walking encyclopedia of kosher information,” said Rabbi Don Yoel.

In 1979, Rabbi Levy told the New York Times that he had already logged millions of miles. The reporter described him as having “the sinews of a young man and the gray beard of a patriarch,” evidence of the fact that he spent three-quarters of the year away from home.

“He had just returned from West Germany,” the article continued, “where he looked into the production of kosher cysteine hydrochloride made from human hair provided by cooperative barbers.... Rabbi Levy stopped in Denmark to check on candy, and in the Netherlands to inspect cookies.... He thinks back also to his efforts in Japan (rennet), Taiwan (mushrooms), Spain (olive oil), England (sweets), Portugal (sardines) and Belgium (chocolates).”

By the 1980s, Rabbi Levy’s perseverance in investigating even basic ingredients had made him the face of kosher in America. “He was much more than the OU was; he was much stronger,” said Rabbi Yosef Wikler, publisher of Kashrus Magazine. He attributed Rabbi Levy’s dominance to his willingness to travel, as opposed to other agencies, “where a lot of people were sitting at home and making telephone calls.”

One of the ingredients Rabbi Levy investigated was oil. Natural oils were universally accepted as kosher by other agencies. “What could go wrong with coconut oil?” many in the industry said. But on visits to oil plants and other factories around the world, Rabbi Levy discovered that a lot could, and did, go wrong with oil.

Chief among Rabbi Levy’s concerns were the ships and ISO tankers that transported the oils. The tankers also carried lard, tallow, non-kosher refined glycerin and fatty acids. If kosher oil was placed in the tankers after such a shipment, it would be rendered non-kosher. To resolve this, Rabbi Levy introduced a system for monitoring the tankers, much of which is still used today.

Another concern was that factories often fried multiple foods in the same oil. Banana chips, for example, might seem perfectly innocuous, if one didn’t know that they were fried in the same oil as cheese rings, pork rinds and other non-kosher foods, Rabbi Levy wrote in 1981.

In fact, manufacturers were not even required to list the oil a product was fried in as an ingredient. One company told him that “as long as no vegetable shortening was used in the product, and the product was only cooked in vegetable shortening – or any other shortening – the law did not require the listing of the shortening as an ingredient on the package.” Shocked, Rabbi Levy wrote, “The company could be frying the product in lard and there need be no mention of it on the package, and they would not be breaking the law!”

In April 1974, Rabbi Levy recounted how one company had asked for certification, asserting that they used only vegetable fats in their baked goods. All the labels on their products made the same claim, and during Rabbi Levy’s visit, a company executive repeated it.

As they stepped into the factory, however, there in front of them was a row of newly stacked cartons of blended animal and vegetable fats. “What’s this?” Rabbi Levy asked. “It must be a mistake,” the executive stammered. “I really don’t

know.”

“This is serious,” Rabbi Levy told him. “Your label states that you use only vegetable oil.” The executive responded, “We never said our products are kosher.”

For the company, it was simple economics: the prices of vegetable and animal fats at the time were fluctuating and competing with one another. At one point, the cost of animal fat was substantially below that of vegetable oil. “It was much more economical for the company to use animal fat blended with vegetable fat,” Rabbi Levy wrote.

While consumers relied on companies to disclose their ingredients, he explained, one could not always trust a label. Labels were expensive to print, and if a temporary change were made to the ingredients, the company would not destroy all their valuable labels. ☹



MEET OUR STAFF:

BEHIND THE

Interview with Rabbi Shlomo Klein




Rabbi Shlomo Klein


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

RSK: I was born and raised in Boro Park, Brooklyn. I learned in the Skverer Cheder, Yeshiva Shaarei Yosher, and then continued learning in the Gateshead Yeshiva. When I returned home I learned in the Mirrer Yeshiva in Brooklyn.


KS: What did you do after yeshiva?

RSK: I married my wife Ruchie (nee Low), a Los Angeles native, in the summer of 1994. In 1997, I joined the Los Angeles Chassidische Kollel where I received semicha of Yora and Yodin. I also taught Halacha and Gemara at the Los Angeles Mesivta. In 2006, I was appointed as the Rov of Congregation Or Hachaim. Soon thereafter I was asked by Rabbi Avrohom Teichman to join him as a member of the rabbinical board of Kehilla Kosher (which has since merged with the ) and as a Dayan in Bais Din Agudas Yisroel.


KS: What is your current position at the ?

RSK: I am the West Coast Rabbinic Coordinator. My responsibilities include setting up and overseeing  Kosher certified establishments in the area. My responsibilities also include being actively involved in  Kosher's Los Angeles Food Service Department (local bakeries, restaurants and catering), headed by Rabbi Kalman Weinfeld and his dedicated professional team in New York and Los Angeles.


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

RSK: The knowledge and application of halacha is obviously very important in kashrus. However, there is more than that needed. Much skill, insight, and essentially a broad understanding of mysterious ingredients and complex equipment is vital to guarantee the public trust in the  symbol. I had the privilege to learn from the most experienced and brilliant minds in the kashrus industry today, namely Rabbis Avrohom Teichman, Levi Marmul-szteyn and Sholom Ber Hendel.


KS: What is best thing about working at the ?

RSK: Being a kashrus coordinator is an awesome responsibility; it's frankly quite frightening. You realize that your decisions can make a difference in the lives thousands of people. At the , in addition to an excellent staff of field representatives and a highly advanced cutting-edge database software, we have the advantage of a warm family-like environment where colleagues and management look out for you and are eager to lend a helping hand. It is especially comforting that Rabbi Levy himself reviews, advises and guides on every kashrus decision.

KS: How would you describe the  today?

RSK: For the Kosher consumer, the  symbol on a product means that you can enjoy the food with confidence that

The best research is no comparison to actually seeing, even if that means visiting a coconut oil plant deep in the jungle of the Sumatra Island of Indonesia where the only way to get there is by taking a 12-hour round trip voyage on a small 8 passenger boat.



it meets very high standards of kashrus without compromise. For companies, the  means that kashrus standards are not negotiable and kashrus compliance will be paramount. At the same time, the companies enjoy superb professionalism and outstanding customer relationship with a globally recognized and accepted symbol.

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

RSK: There is one question that I'm asked all the time: Which type of chossid am I? The answer is not a simple one, since my father is a nephew of the Belzer Rav ZT"L and my wife is a niece of the Satmar Rav ZT"L. There is a famous Gemara (made famous by Mordechai Ben David) that says when Moshiach will come all tzaddikim will be dancing around in a circle with Hashem in the center and all the tzaddikim will point their finger to Hashem and say, "Hinei Elokeinu Zeh". When the person on the west side of the circle points eastward and the person opposite him points westward it appears as they disagree. However, when Moshiach will come, we will all see that the tzaddikim are all pointing in the same direction, towards Hashem. To answer the question: I guess you could say that I'm going around in circles.


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

RSK: While I was teaching halacha some eighteen years ago, we learned in a popular sefer that the brocha for chocolate is ha'nitz, because the cocoa bean grows on a tree. I did extensive research to study the production process of chocolate and my conclusion was that for several reasons (8 to be exact), the brocha is shehakol. I wrote a letter to the author and in the ensuing correspondence I was somewhat surprised when he asked me to explain some parts of the production process.

While working for the , I visited several chocolate plants, large and small, and I learned some new significant details about the process that I did not know from my previous research. This experience validated to me Rabbi Levy's insistence that  facilities must be visited annually and reviewed anew by a Rabbinic Coordinator, in addition to the local mashgichim visiting and supervising. The best research is no comparison to actually seeing, even if that means visiting a coconut oil plant deep in the jungle of the Sumatra Island of Indonesia where the only way to get there is by taking a 12-hour round trip voyage on a small 8 passenger boat.

What Other People Say

Rabbi Shlomo Klein

“ Reb Shlomo Klein has been a great addition to the  Rabbinical staff. His knowledge and clarity in halacha, combined with his understanding of the technical aspects of the kashrus world, and a friendly, down-to-earth disposition makes him a pleasure to work with. It's an honor to have him as a member of our rabbinic staff.”

Rabbi Don Yoel Levy

Kashrus Administrator

“ Rabbi Klein is a quick learner; warm and easygoing. He has built connections and solid relationships with the companies assigned to him, always leaving a positive and favorable impression. Rabbi Klein's determination to help colleagues and companies has created a wonderful working environment in which problems and questions are duly resolved, while his sense of humor has enabled him to inform various companies of difficult decisions or changes with total acceptance and cooperation on their part. Rabbi Klein is a great friend and colleague and a pleasure to work with.”

Rabbi Sholom Ber Hendel

Rabbinic Coordinator

“ In order to be successful in the kashrus field you need the following 3 things: Yiras Shomayim, Havanah (understanding in laws of kashrus and the world of machinery and how they connect) and a sense of organization and work ethic. Rabbi Klein was blessed with all three.”

Rabbi Kalman Weinfeld

Rabbinic Coordinator

THE SHOFAR is narrow on one end and broad on the other. The broad end is where the horn was attached to the animal's head, and the narrow end is the tip of the horn. There are two rules in the Shulchan Aruch regarding the two ends of the shofar. One is that if someone mechanically changes the shape of the shofar by applying heat, making the narrow end wide and the wide end narrow, the shofar is *pasul* — disqualified. This is based on the Torah's statement "veha'avarta shofar teruah" — "you shall sound the blast of a teruah," in which the word "veha'avarta" teaches that it must be "derech ha'avarato" — "in the manner in which it is carried on the animal's head".

Another halachah states that even when one does not make any physical changes in the shofar, but merely reverses it and blows through the wide end, he does not fulfill the mitzvah. A hint to this halachah is found in the pasuk, "min hameitzar karati Kah annani bamerchav Kah" — "from the straights [lit. narrow] I called to Gd, and then Gd answered me with expansiveness [lit. wide open]".²

The first halachah is very easy to comprehend, but the second one is somewhat puzzling. To turn around a shofar and blow through the wide side, is extremely difficult. Why is one who exerts such effort to produce the prescribed tones rejected, receiving no credit for fulfilling the mitzvah?

When Bilaam was hired by Balak to curse the Jewish people, he said in amazement "Mah tovu ohalecha Yaakov mishkenosecha Yisrael" — "How goodly are your tents O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel".³ Rashi comments that Bilaam was amazed when "he saw that the openings [of their tents] were not lined up with one opposite the other." Why did he focus on their "openings"?

1 Rosh Hashanah 27b, Orach Chaim 586:12.

2 Psalms 118:5.

3 Bamidbar 24:5.

Rabbi Baruch of Mezibuz, a grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov, explains it in the following way. The Midrash Rabbah⁴ says that Hashem urges the Jewish people to do teshuvah, saying: "Make a small opening like that of the head of a needle, and I will open for you an opening through which caravans can enter." In other words, the Jew merely has to begin the teshuvah process, and Hashem will help him to attain the most lofty goals. Thus, the "openings" that Jews have to make and Hashem's reciprocal opening are not comparable.

Therefore, in praise and envy Bilaam said, "You Jews are so lucky; your opening and Hashem's opening are not 'lined up' — i.e. not identical — to each other. You only have to put in a little effort, and Hashem opens for you the vast gates of teshuvah. If your Gd loves you so much, how can my cursing possibly have an effect?"

The Rambam⁵ writes that though the sounding of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah is one of the six hundred and thirteen commandments of the Torah, it also conveys a call to the people to awaken from their slumber and do teshuvah — repent to Hashem.

It may be said that the two openings of the shofar, the narrow one and the wide one, represent the minute opening the Jew makes and the reciprocal broad opening of Hashem. While many may hesitate to do teshuvah, thinking that it is very difficult for one to return and come close to Hashem, the message of the shofar refutes this. It is simple to do teshuvah. Just make a small opening, move closer to Hashem, and He will open up His gates for you and facilitate your return.

The halachah about turning the shofar around and blowing through the wide end is a metaphor for those who preach that teshuvah is very difficult and that one must go through much effort in order to satisfy Hashem. This approach is contrary to our belief and, therefore, unacceptable and disqualified. The message conveyed by our way of blowing the shofar is that teshuvah is not difficult; a person simply has to make a small opening — a little effort — and he will reap immense reward.

4 Song of Songs 5:3.

5 Teshuvah 3:4.

The SHAPE of the SHOFAR

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The Most Opportune Time for Teshuvah

The Gemara, in tractates Brochos and Eruvin, relates that Rabbi Yochanon says that it is better for a person to walk after (behind) a lion then after a woman...

Reb Levik Schneerson, the father of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, once gave some insight in to this saying. He explained:

It is well known that every month has its mazel; for example, Tishrei is the mazel of *moznayim* (the scale), Cheshvon is *akrov* (scorpion), the month of Av is mazel *ari* (lion), and the month of Elul is *besulah* (maiden woman). Rabbi Yochanon says it is better to go after the *ari* (the month of Av) and do teshuvah in the month of Elul, than to wait and do teshuvah after *besulah* (the month of Elul), leaving your teshuvah to the “last minute” by waiting for Tishrei, for when Rosh Hashanah comes around one should already be ready to face the king.

There is a similar thought in the first Mishnah of Rosh Hashanah. The Tanna Kama says that Rosh Hashanah *L'maaser B'heimah* (Tithe for Livestock) is on Rosh Chodesh Elul, however Rabbi Eliezer and Rebbi Shimon argue and say that the Rosh Hashanah for livestock is on the first day of Tishrei.

One can say that the Tanna Kama believes that one who waits until the last minute to do teshuvah (waiting until the final month of the year, Elul), is like a *b'heimah* (an animal). However, Rabbi Eliezer and Rebbi Shimon say only one who waits until the first day of Tishrei is like an animal, but in the month of Elul one can and should do teshuvah.

Coming Soon

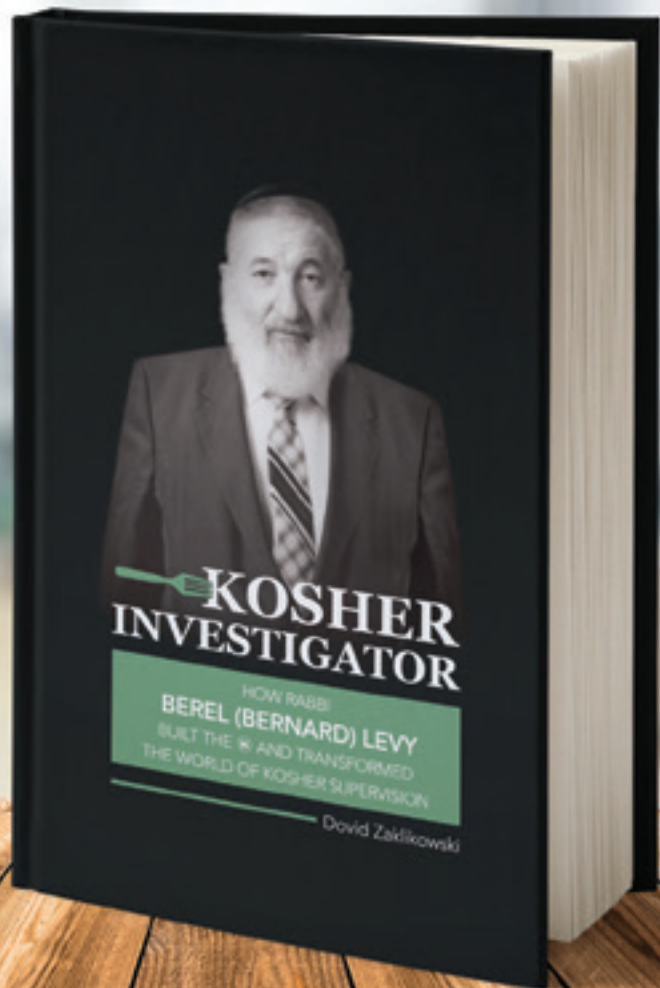
November 2017!

"Kosher Investigator beautifully captures Rabbi Berel Levy's remarkable contributions to kosher food – and, more generally, to Judaism. A skilled investigator himself, author Dovid Zaklikowski draws on oral interviews, obscure printed sources, and Rabbi Levy's previously unknown personal papers to provide a revelatory account of his life. Written with great sympathy – and not shying away from controversial topics – this carefully researched book is a page-turner that readers will thoroughly enjoy."

—Dr. Roger Horowitz
author of *Kosher USA: How Coke became kosher and other tales of modern food.*

"Kosher Investigator pays honor to a founding father of modern industrial kosher certification. Rabbi Berel Levy's passionate commitment to yiddishkeit and his keen powers of investigation helped transform the American kosher certification system into a model of reliable private regulation. Dovid Zaklikowski's inspiring account also reveals the love of Torah and Am Yisroel that motivated Rabbi Levy's many achievements."

—Professor Timothy D. Lytton
author of *Kosher: Private Regulation in the Age of Industrial Food*



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K^{OK}OSHER SPIRIT