

K[®]OSHER SPIRIT

CERTIFIED SOUL NUTRITION

בס"ד
תשרי תשפ"ה
TISHREI 5785

לשנה טובה ומתוקה

WISHING YOU A HAPPY,
HEALTHY & SWEET NEW YEAR



KOSHER SPIRIT



is dedicated to

RABBI BEREL LEVY OB"M and RABBI DON YOEL LEVY OB"M,

who set the standards of kashrus at Kosher Certification and who inspire us daily to perpetuate and uphold their legacy.

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SOUL NUTRITION

by Rabbi Chaim Fogelman



photo credit: Marko Dasher

Dear Reader,

As the month of Tishrei approaches, we once again prepare for a new year and pray that the coming year be better than the last. We pray for our personal needs and those of our families, we pray for Klal Yisroel as a whole, we pray for our holy land of Eretz Yisroel, and we pray for peace, and for all those who need salvation.

We sometimes wonder what more we can do for Israel, and how can we, personally, and as a nation receive more of Hashem's blessings. Our Chachomim tell us that Hashem's blessings are bestowed upon us when we are united and in peace with each other. This is one of the lessons we can learn from Rosh Hashanah. As you all know, even though all holidays in Eretz Yisroel are celebrated for one day as opposed to two days in the Diaspora, when it comes to Rosh Hashanah, even in Eretz Yisroel it is celebrated for two days. One of the deeper reasons given for this is to unite all Jews, observing Yom Tov at the same time, wherever they may be, and to start the year as one. This year we all will have three days of Yomim Tovim: Thursday, Friday, and Shabbos. Perhaps the message is that this year we all need to put in extra effort to achieve peace and unity among all of Klal Yisroel. Surely this will cause Hashem great satisfaction and He will shower us with peace and revealed blessings in every aspect of our lives.

It's in this spirit that the launched a new outreach program to reach out to Jewish communities, schools, camps, and shuls, to educate and share the knowledge and experience that we have in the world of kashrus.

I would like to welcome Rabbi Sholom Kesselman, the West Coast Food Service Director at Kosher to the Consumer Education team. Rabbi Kesselman has many years of experience in education and will spearhead our outreach efforts through written content, in person lectures, and more. We wish him much success in his new role.

Wishing you a happy, healthy, peaceful, and sweet new year. K'siva v'chasima tovah, shanah tovah u'mesukah.

Rabbi Chaim Fogelman

Editor in Chief, Kosher Executive Vaad HaKashrus

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By Rabbi Sholom
Ber Lepkivker
Rabbinic
Coordinator

What's the Brocha? **Schnitzel**

What brocha do we say on schnitzel? Shehakol of course...
Or is it? Like many other instances, the Jewish answer to this
question is – it depends.

When discussing the matter of *ikar v'tafel* (primary and secondary) in *Birkas Hanehenin*¹, the Baal HaTanya writes that a *mezonos* food never loses its status of *ikar*, even if it is only added as a flavoring agent. This is unlike other ingredients, which are considered *tafel* and are subject to the brocha of the primary food. The only time *mezonos* loses its status as *ikar* is when it is added as a color or thickener. Even then, if the *mezonos* part is recognized or is an integral part of the dish it regains its status as *ikar*.

Schnitzel, which literally means “a small slice” (of chicken, in this context), can be made in various ways; however, the most common way is breaded. The slice of chicken is dipped in egg, coated with breadcrumbs, and fried (or baked). Based on the ruling of the Baal HaTanya, the correct brocha on schnitzel is *mezonos*, even though the chicken might seem to be the *ikar*.

It is not clear whether the entire piece of schnitzel (chicken and breadcrumbs) counts towards the amount needed to say only one brocha *acharona*, so one should eat two *kezaysim*, one *kezayis* of *mezonos* and one *kezayis* of *shehakol*.



L'chaim, ¡Salud!, Cheers,

TO KOSHER TEQUILA



BY RABBI RAFI CHAYO,
K REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE - LATIN AMERICA

Tequila has become increasingly popular in the Jewish world, coinciding with a staggering increase in tequila popularity among the general population. Vodka and whiskey are no longer the primary options at social events and shul kiddushim. Tequila, especially artisanal varieties, is now ubiquitous. You probably know a few tequila brands, and might have a favorite tequila cocktail, but do you know how tequila is made?

Tequila is derived from the agave plant, a succulent native to the Americas, recognized by its rosette shape and large, fleshy leaves. Indigenous peoples in Mexico and other parts of the Americas have traditionally used agave for food, medicine, fermented beverages, and more.

There are several varieties of agave, but blue agave is the type used for

tequila production and is native only to certain regions of Mexico.

In contrast to the raw materials used in other spirits, such as whiskey and vodka, which reach maturity in a short period, blue agave plants take 7 to 10 years to mature enough for use in tequila production and are sometimes harvested before reaching full maturity due to production needs. Strong and skilled field workers harvest blue agave using a curved axe called a “coa” to cut off the agave leaves and expose the heart, which is the part used for production, and the agave hearts are loaded onto trucks and transported to the distilleries. The Tequila Regulatory Council (CRT) authorizes all production facilities, which must comply with the standards and regulations established by the Official Mexican Standard (NOM) for tequila production.

At the distillery, agave hearts are cut into two or four parts and put in ovens or autoclaves (a type of pressure cooker) to begin the cooking process, typically using direct steam. The agave is cooked for 24 hours in an oven, or about 12 hours in an autoclave. Cooking the agave converts starch into sugars, extracts rich juices, and develops sweet, smoky, and caramelized flavors.

After cooking, the agave is crushed using mills to extract the juice. The juice is transferred to stainless steel tanks to begin the fermentation process, where yeast consumes the sugars and converts them into alcohol. Typically, commercial yeasts and nutrients are used; however, fermentation can sometimes be achieved with naturally occurring yeasts from the agave. Organic tequila does not use commercial yeast, and,



in such cases, the fermentation process takes longer.

The fermented agave juice, called “must”, undergoes distillation with stills, boilers, and condensers, where it is heated to purify and concentrate the alcohol. The resulting product is tequila blanco (white). There are aged tequilas that

be new barrels or ones previously used for whiskey. These barrels impart unique flavors and characteristics to the tequila during its aging process. After the maturation process is completed, the tequila is filtered and diluted to the desired alcohol level, bottled, and sold.

DOES TEQUILA NEED KOSHER CERTIFICATION?

© Kosher certifies over three dozen tequila brands, and we are contacted daily by companies looking for kosher certification for their distilleries. As the © Regional Representative to Latin America and a native Spanish speaker, I have traveled to numerous



remain in barrels for specified periods according to regulations. Blanco (silver) tequila is aged for up to sixty days or not aged at all, Reposado is aged for two months to one year, Añejo is aged for one to three years, and Extra Añejo is aged for over three years.

American oak barrels are commonly used to mature the tequila. They can

distilleries to train company staff in kosher requirements and guide them through the certification process.

Our experience in the field has shown us that companies like to innovate and use different types of barrels, including those previously used for wines and brandies. This poses a problem for kosher consumers because sometimes this information is not declared on the bottle.








If the tequila did not achieve the desired color during the aging process, caramel color can be added to the tequila.

Most consumers do not know that the governmental regulations for tequila production allow adding some additives without needing to declare them on the ingredient panel, including oak extract (a flavor produced using alcohol) and glycerin, which improves smoothness and mouthfeel. If your tequila tastes too smooth, it quite likely contains glycerin. Glycerin can be of animal or vegetable origin, which can be a serious kosher concern.

Another issue to consider is the transfer of tequila between production facilities: one distillery may produce tequila to sell to a second company so that the second company can bottle it under their own brand. Here we have two considerations: 1) Is the original producer kosher certified to a high standard? 2) The truck transporting the liquid must be kosher certified especially because alcohol is considered *davar charif* (sharp).

There is a fairly new product called *Añejo Cristalino*. It is tequila aged in barrels, but after the aging period, it is filtered to remove the color and retains only the flavor imparted by the barrel. I was invited to a meeting where they offered an *Añejo Cristalino* without a kosher certification on the bottle, but the label indicated that it was aged in wine barrels. The host was mistaken in thinking that the colorless nature of the tequila meant there was no risk of it being aged in wine barrels. One must pay special attention not to confuse it with tequila blanco.

When it comes to Pesach, all the sensitive ingredients mentioned above have a risk of being *chometz* (or at least *kitniyos*). Therefore, tequila requires special certification for Passover, regardless of the type of tequila.


The  recommends consuming tequila with a reliable kosher certification year-round to avoid all possible concerns. I have personally visited dozens of distilleries, consistently uncovering new insights, many of which have direct implications on kosher standards. As a result, the  continuously reviews the kosher requirements to truly provide a product that is kosher without compromise. 

MOST CONSUMERS DO NOT KNOW THAT THE GOVERNMENTAL REGULATIONS FOR TEQUILA PRODUCTION ALLOW ADDING SOME ADDITIVES WITHOUT NEEDING TO DECLARE THEM ON THE INGREDIENT PANEL, INCLUDING OAK EXTRACT (A FLAVOR PRODUCED USING ALCOHOL) AND GLYCERIN



FISH

are a significant part of the month of Tishrei. There is a minhag to place the head of a fish on the table on Rosh Hashanah as a reminder that we should be like the head (making good choices) and not the tail. We also have a minhag to do tashlich at a body of water that contains live fish. And finally, it's a minhag to serve fish at every Shabbos and Yom Tov meal. It's a good thing fish has so many health benefits!



FISH contains high levels of omega-3 fatty acids, which help maintain healthy heart and brain function, prevent inflammation, and are important for fetal development during pregnancy.



THE healthiest fish to eat include sardines, salmon, trout, Arctic char, halibut, cod, branzino, flounder, tuna and anchovies.




EATING

sardines twice a week has shown to lower risk of Type 2 diabetes in those with prediabetes.



FISH

contains 15-20 grams of protein per 3.5 ounce cooked serving, making it a great choice for a healthy meal.



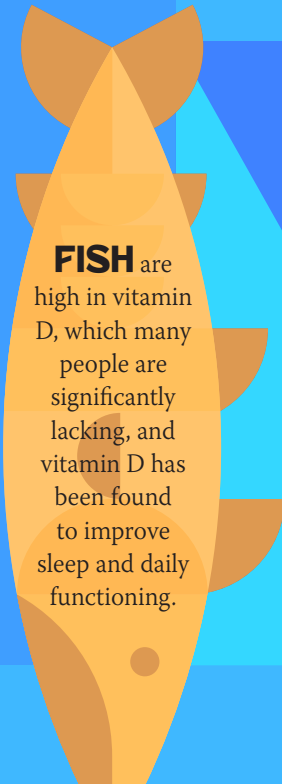
OILY fish, like salmon, trout, and sardines, are the best source of omega-3 fats.



THE

omega-3 fatty acids in fish can help fight depression and may even help prevent it.

Ⓚ Kosher requires all skinless fish products to be supervised by a mashgiach temidi, aside from salmon because the pink color of the flesh is unique and easily recognized.



FISH are high in vitamin D, which many people are significantly lacking, and vitamin D has been found to improve sleep and daily functioning.



WHEN

eating raw fish, take care to ensure that you are purchasing fresh, sushi grade fish from a reputable fishmonger.

חגבים הטהורים, מלמד אף הוא, במרומז, כי כל שאר שרצי העוף אסורים באכילה. נשאלת השאלה, מדוע צריכים שני לימודים כדי לאסור את שרץ העוף? אומר רבי יעקב, שהפסוק השני בא ללמדנו: "שרץ עוף טמא אין אתה אוכל, אבל אתה אוכל מה שעוף טמא משריץ. ואיזה זה? זה דבש דבורים".

דבש גזין וצרעין

באותה סוגיה דנה הגמרא בשאלה, האם ההיתר לאכול דבש חל אך ורק על דבש דבורים, או שמא מותר לאכול גם דבש המיוצר על ידי שרצי עוף אחרים, דוגמת הגזין והצרעין שמייצרים אף הם דבש.

ובכן לשיטת הברייתא, שהטעם להתיר אכילת דבש הוא שתחילת ייצור הדבש הינו בצוף הפרחים, נתיר גם אכילת דבש המיוצר (מצוף הפרחים) על ידי בעלי חיים אחרים. אך לדעת רבי יעקב שזהו חידוש הנדרש מפסוקי התורה, אם כן "אין לך בו אלא חידוש". ומכיוון שכאשר הבריות אומרות 'דבש' (סתם) כוונתן היא לדבש דבורים, לכן רק דבש זה יהיה מותר באכילה. ב'תוספתא' (דברי תנאים שלא נכללו במשניות) במסכת בכורות מבואר, כי רק דבש דבורים הוא צוף הנשאב מן הפרחים, ועל כן הוא מותר באכילה. ולעומתו דבש צרעות הרי הוא ריר מתוק היוצא מגוף הצרעה ולפיכך הוא נכלל באיסור אכילת שרצים והיוצא מהם.

להבדיל בין דבש ל'דבש'

רש"י מדייק מתוך דברי הגמרא, ועושה הבחנה ברורה בין דבש דבורים לדבש צרעות. לפי הסברו של רש"י (המובא גם בבית יוסף על הטור, יורה דעה סימן פא), הדבורים פולטות את הדבש לתוך כוורת מסודרת שאותה הן מייצרות מדונג. לעומתן צרעות וכן כל יתר השרצים המסוגלים לייצר דבש,

אינם פולטים את הדבש באופן מסודר לכוורות דונג.

ועה נפסק להלכה?

ב'תוספתא', וכן ב'הלכות בכורות' לרמב"ן, נפסק להלכה כדעת רבי יעקב - לאסור דבש צרעות, וזאת מפני שיש כאן ספק כאילו דעה יש לפסוק, ומדובר ב'ספק איסור דאורייתא' שדינו לחומרה. לדעה זו יש מקורות ונימוקים נוספים, וכמותה פסק גם הרא"ש.

לעומתם רבנו תם ביספר הישר' פסק כדעת הברייתא, להתיר גם דבש צרעות, שהרי מצינו משנה מפורשת (מסכת מכשירין פרק ו, משנה ד): "דבש צרעים, טהור ומותר באכילה". כמותו פסק גם הרמב"ם (הלכות מאכלות אסורות פרק ג, הלכה ג) - להתיר דבש צרעות.

למעשה נפסק בשלחן ערוך כי אין צורך לחשוש, שכן דבש צרעות אינו מצוי כלל במקומותינו, כיוון שרוב סוגי הצרעות אינם מייצרים דבש כלל, ובטח לא באופן מסודר המגיע לכוורת מסודרת.

האם אפשר לקנות דבש ללא חותמת כשרות

לאור הנ"ל מובן כי מעיקר הדין, כאשר ברור לנו שהדבש הינו 'מאה אחוז טבעי', מותר לאוכלו ללא חשש, אף אם אינו נושא עליו חותמת כשרות.

ואולם מחירו הגבוה של הדבש גרם לכך, שבשנים האחרונות השווקים מוצפים ב'דבש' מזויף, כלומר דבש שמעורבבים בו מים וחומרי גלם נוספים, ואלה עלולים להיות לא

כשרים או גם חלביים.

ומכיוון שלא בכל המדינות מקפידים לאכוף את חוקי המזון, שלא לערבב חומרי גלם נוספים במוצרים שעל תויותם נכתב 'מאה אחוז טבעי' - ראוי לכל אדם ירא שמים, לצרוך אך ורק דבש עם פיקוח כשרותי.

[נגענו 'על קצה המזלג' בסוגיית כשרות הדבש. ישנם נושאים נוספים הנוגעים לתהליך הייצור ולהיבטים ההלכתיים השונים של הדבש. לדוגמה, תהליך ייצור דפי הדונג, וכן נושא 'מזון מְלָכוֹת' המצריך מאמר בפני עצמו. אך קצרה היריעה מלהקיף את הנושא בשלמותו, ועוד חזון למועד אי"ה.]

"דבש וחלב תחת לשונך"

התורה נמשלה לדבש, כנאמר (שיר השירים ד,יא), "דִּבְשׁ וְחֶלֶב תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנְךָ".

בעומדנו בפתחה של השנה החדשה, אי אפשר שלא להיזכר גם בהנהגת התורנית וההלכתית, המתוקה מדבש, של נשיא ועד הכשרות או קיי הרה"ג דן יואל ליווי זצ"ל, אשר הדריך וחינך באהבת תורה וביראת שמים דורות של תלמידים מומחי כשרות. חסרונו מורגש בכל שאלה הלכתית העומדת על הפרק. זכותו תגן עלינו, שנזכה כולנו ל"שנה טובה ומתוקה"!



הרב שלמה חיים הלוי וינפלד
חבר ועד הכשרות

כשרות דבש הדבורים



המפרק ומפריד את הסוכרים והחומרים הגבישים מן הנוזלים, וכך בסיוע אותו אנזים, מתבצע תהליך כימיקלי להפרדת החומרים והפיכת הצוף לדבש. במקביל ליצירת הדבש, הטביע הקב"ה בגוף הדבורה יכולת להפריד חומרים ולהפריש גם חומר הנקרא דונג, אותו הדבורה מפרישה בצורת משטח עם משקעים במבנה של משושים ('כוורת דבורים'). ולתוך אותם משושי דונג, פולטת הדבורה את הדבש, על מנת לשמר מזון לעת הצורך בעבור כלל הדבורים שבכוורת.

דפי דונג וצנטריפוגות

בעלי הכוורת נוהגים להניח בשדות קופסאות עם מסגרות עץ שבהן 'דפי דונג' עם משקעים משושים, המיוצרים מדונג טבעי (ומדמים כוורת טבעית מהסוג שהדבורים יוצרות בעצמן). הדבורים המריחות את הדונג נמשכות אליו, ופולטות לתוך אותם 'דפים' את דבשן. ביחד עם הדבש הן גם מפרישות בכוורת את הדונג הנוצר בגופן, בתהליך ההפרדה של הצוף.

בשלב הבא אוסף הכוורת את המסגרות עם 'דפי הדונג' המלאים דבש, ובתהליך קילוף פשוט הוא רודה מהם את הדבש.

הדבש מוכנס לצנטריפוגה שמסתובבת במהירות, ופערי המשקל בין הדבש לדונג גורמים להפרדה של הדונג מן הדבש. מהדונג ייוצרו עוד 'דפי דונג', כמו גם נרות לחנוכה או להבדלה. והדבש, הוא ממשיך לתהליכי סינון נוספים, עד אשר מתקבל דבש טהור, נקי משאריות דונג או כל פסולת אחרת, ומוכן לאריזה סופית.

טעם נוסף להיתר לאכול דבש

בסוגיה התלמודית הנ"ל מובאים דברי רבי יעקב, עם טעם נוסף להיתר לאכול דבש:
איסור אכילת שרץ העוף מופיע בתורה פעמיים, זו אחר זו. פעם אחת באופן מפורש (ויקרא יא, כ), "כל שֶׁרָץ הָעוֹף הֵהָלָךְ עַל אֲרְבַּע שֶׁקֶץ הוּא לָכֶם", ופעם שנייה (שם יא, כא) במשמעות: "אֵךְ אֵת זֶה תֹאכְלוּ מִכָּל שֶׁרָץ הָעוֹף... אֲשֶׁר לוֹ כַּרְעִים מִמֶּעַל לְרַגְלָיו, לְנִתֵּר בָּהֶן עַל הָאֲרֶץ". פסוק זה הבא להתיר אכילת

הטור (אורח חיים סימן תקפג), שבארצות אשכנז נהגו, בליל ראש השנה, "לאכול בתחילת הסעודה תפוח מתוק בדבש, (ו)לומר 'תתחדש עלינו שנה מתוקה'".

ומוסיפים הפוסקים, שהמנהג הוא לברך על התפוח "בורא פרי העץ", אף אם האכילה היא בתוך הסעודה, כיוון שאכילת התפוח איננה חלק מהסעודה.

אכילת התפוח בראש השנה מרמזת לדברי יצחק אבינו בברכתו ליעקב בנו (בראשית כז, כז), "רֵיחַ רֵיחַ בְּנֵי כְרִיחַ שְׂדֵה אֲשֶׁר בִּירְכּוֹ ה'"; ועל זה פירשו בגמרא (תענית כט, ב), "כריח שדה של תפוחים". 'שדה תפוחים', על פי חכמת הנסתר, רומז לגן עדן.

כמו כן יש הנוהגים לטבול גם את פרוסת החלה בדבש - לסימן שנזכה לשנה טובה ומתוקה, ועל שם הנאמר (נחמיה ח, ט) על ראש השנה, "לָכֵן אֲכָלוּ מִשְׁמַנִּים וְשָׁתוּ מִמַּתְקִים וְשָׁלְחוּ מְנוֹת לְאֵין נֶכֶן לוֹ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ הַיּוֹם לְאֲדֹנָינוּ".

איך מותר לאכול דבש?

ישנו כלל הלכתי המובא במשנה (בכורות ה, ב), "היוצא מן הטמא - טמא". כלומר כל דבר שמקורו אסור באכילה, גם הוא עצמו אסור באכילה.

לאור זאת נשאלת השאלה, כיצד מותרת אכילת דבש הבא מן הדבורים, שהן שרץ העוף האסור באכילה?!

סוגיה זו מתבארת בגמרא (שם ז, ב), המביאה ברייתא שקובעת כי הדבש איננו חלק מגוף הדבורה, ומשכך גם לא נכלל בגדר "היוצא מן הטמא". שכן מקורו האמיתי של הדבש הוא צוף הפרחים, והדבורה רק מסייעת להפרדת החומרים השונים שבצוף ולהפיכת הצוף לדבש צמיגי.

דבש טבעי – מנפלאות הבורא

התהליך מתחיל כשהדבורה מוצצת צוף פרחים באמצעות חדק ארוך וגמיש המצוי בראשה. משם הצוף עובר דרך הפה למעי קטן בבטן הדבורה (שהוא נפרד לגמרי מן המעי המשמש לעיכול המזון). במקום אחסון הצוף מצוי אנזים טבעי

PART 2

IS



CULTURED

MEAT



BY RABBI SHOLOM KESSELMAN,
Ⓚ West Coast Food Service
Coordinator

KOSHER?



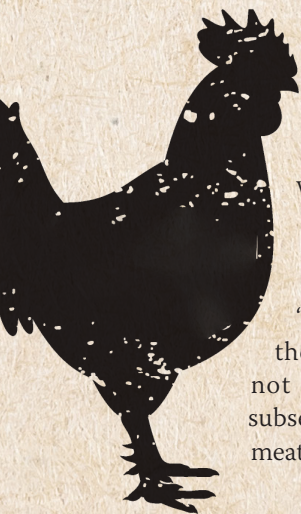
In part one of this series, we broadly discussed the technology and process of growing meat in a lab. As a reminder, lab-grown meat is created from stem cells that are fed in a laboratory with specialized culture media. As the cells grow, they are induced to become muscle fibers. The tissue then matures to achieve the desired flavor and texture. We also raised questions about the kosher status of lab-grown meat. This installment will address the first few questions, one at a time.

1. Non-kosher stem cells: If the stem cells originate from a non-kosher animal, does this preclude the resulting meat from being considered kosher?
2. Kosher stem cells: Can the stem cells be harvested from a living kosher animal, or is this a form of *eiver min hachai*?
3. Salting: Must the animal have undergone *melicha* (salting to remove the blood), before the stem cells are procured?

THE FIRST CONCERN WE WILL ADDRESS IS NON-KOSHER STEM CELLS.

If the stem cells originate from a non-kosher animal, can the resulting meat be considered kosher?

The answer seems to be an obvious no. There is a clear ruling in Mishna Bechoros 5B: “That which is *yotzei* (comes out) from an impure animal is likewise impure.” This ruling would include stem cells extracted from a non-kosher animal. Since they are “*yotzei min hatamei*” they are considered not kosher and the subsequently engineered meat is not kosher.



HOWEVER, THERE ARE TWO COUNTERARGUMENTS.

1 Halacha only prohibits forbidden “food” items. Substances that do not qualify as “food,” such as dried out bones and hides, are always considered kosher, even when coming from a non-kosher animal. Halacha characterizes them as “mere dirt” (*afra b’alma*) or “mere wood” (*eitz b’alma*). They are NOT meat, and they are therefore kosher and *pareve*.

Theoretically, if the starter cells are procured from these non-edible parts of the animal, they could be considered halachically permissible and the subsequently engineered meat is kosher, too. While this technology is not yet available, it could become a consideration in the future.



2 Even if the starter cells are derived from a forbidden part of the animal, such as muscle tissue, or blood, an argument can still be made that the engineered meat could be kosher. This is based on the ruling of “*zeh v’zeh gorev*,” whenever there are multiple factors to consider, if one of these factors is forbidden and the other is permitted, the resulting product is often permitted. An example is presented in the Gemara (Avodah Zara 49a). Produce

from a field that was fertilized with manure previously used for Avodah Zara, or a cow fattened by consuming beans offered as a sacrifice to an idol, are still permitted. The manure is not the sole cause of the resultant produce, nor is the grain fed to a cow the sole cause of its weight gain. In both cases, there is an additional, entirely permissible, cause. Therefore, the resulting product is permitted.

Lab-grown meat can be produced by a forbidden substance, a non-kosher stem cell. But there is a

second element that is necessary for the starter cells to grow and multiply, namely the nutrients introduced into the petri dish that make cell division possible. Therefore, it follows that the cultured meat is the product of zeh v'zeh gorem and might be permissible if the nutrients are derived from kosher sources (even when the original cells are not).

On the other hand, it can be argued that the starter cells are the significantly more critical component, while the nutrients are

far less important. Based on this argument, if the starter cells are not kosher, then the resulting meat is also not kosher as this is not an equal or typical zeh v'zeh gorem.

These questions remain heavily disputed amongst poskim today and it is not within the scope of this article to fully adjudicate the arguments on both sides. I am just presenting some of the basic ideas relevant to this question.

LET'S MOVE ON TO THE NEXT QUESTION.

CAN THE STEM CELLS BE HARVESTED FROM A LIVING KOSHER ANIMAL, OR IS THIS A FORM OF EIVER MIN HACHAI?

We can assume that we are procuring the cells from the muscle tissue of a kosher animal (and putting aside the argument of zeh v'zeh gorem). If the cells are extracted from the animal while it is alive, they might be considered forbidden as eiver min hachai and then the subsequent meat that is

engineered from these cells is likewise forbidden.

The consensus amongst the poskim is that this would be a problem, so the stem cells can only be extracted from the animal after it has been shechted in accordance with Halacha.

The same would be true regarding extracting the cells from a kosher animal that was killed without undergoing Halachic shechita.

Such an animal is a neveila and its meat is not kosher, therefore the stem cells and resulting meat would be not kosher.

It seems that the only kosher way to have lab-grown meat is to extract the cells from a kosher animal that was shechted according to Halacha and whose meat is therefore permissible.

This does complicate things a bit. For the best results, stem cells should be extracted from the animal while it is still alive. Taking them from dead muscle tissue is certainly not conducive to cell proliferation.



TWO SOLUTIONS HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED.

1 Extract the stem cells immediately following shechita. This way the animal is shechted, but the cells are still alive.

This suggestion is still subject to a question that we will deal with later - whether the meat needs to be salted before the cells are extracted.



2 Use of a ben peku'a. A ben peku'a is a live calf that was removed from a pregnant cow after it was shechted. Halachically this animal does not require shechita and the prohibition of ever min hachai does not apply.¹ One would be allowed to extract the cells from a ben peku'a while it is alive.

It should be noted, however, that this solution is not so simple. There is still a Rabbinic obligation to shecht a ben peku'a (for reasons of ma'aras ayin). There are ways to overcome the issue of ma'aras ayin, but they are beyond the scope of this article.

¹ Yoreh Deah, Siman 13, Taz 3.

MUST THE ANIMAL HAVE UNDERGONE MELICHA (SALTING TO REMOVE THE BLOOD) BEFORE THE STEM CELLS ARE PROCURED? CAN STEM CELLS BE DERIVED FROM ANIMAL BLOOD, GIVEN THAT BLOOD IS NOT CONSIDERED KOSHER FOR CONSUMPTION?



The answer to this question is simple. The meat would not require melicha before extracting the cells. The Shulchan Oruch rules that one is allowed to chew a raw piece of meat even before it is salted because the blood inside only becomes prohibited after it is separated from the muscle (typically by cooking). If the blood remains in the muscle, it is permitted.

Another way of looking at it is to understand that even before a piece of meat is salted the piece of meat

itself is not prohibited. It is only the blood within that cannot be consumed. Therefore, when the cells are extracted from the muscle tissue, even if there is blood in the same piece, the extracted cells are permissible.

In part three, we will discuss nutrients fed to the cells in the


lab to make them proliferate, the status of lab-grown meat (whether it is considered pareve or fleishig), and how to deal with issues of *ma'aras ayin*.

These questions and more will be explored in this multipart series featured in the next few editions of *Kosher Spirit*.

THE KOSHER BUSINESS



By Leibel Baumgarten

As kosher consumers, we often wonder, “Is the kosher symbol on this package truly necessary?” “Is it just business,” I say to Rabbi Chaim Fogelman, member of the  Executive Vaad HaKashrus. “I like to say,” he answers, “We’re not in the business of kosher, we’re in the kosher business.” The difference may sound subtle, but it’s about where the emphasis and focus are. “Our role is to provide kosher. The business side must be secondary.”

Take a bottle of 100% freshly squeezed orange juice. What could be so complicated about that? As it turns out, plenty.

By law, companies may omit ingredients on the label that make up less than a certain percentage. 100% is not necessarily 100%. There may be production aids, like anti-foaming agents, release agents, and a host of other additives, like vitamins and



even omega-3 oils, that could pose serious Halachic problems.

There is also the issue of bugs that could end up in the juice depending on the squeezing process used. But even if you pass all those hurdles without concern, there is still the issue of transport. If a company uses a tanker to ship orange juice, if it returns empty, the company incurs a massive expense. Often, companies engage in a practice called backhauling, which involves transporting other commodities on the return legs of the journey, recouping costs, or even turning a profit. A tanker transporting orange juice one day may have transported 100% non-kosher grape juice or even animal fats the day prior.


“For oils that require temperature controls on ships, it is even more complicated,” says Rabbi Fogelman. “Your coconut oil or palm oil could

be shipped in a container that not only transported animal fat, but was heated up to ensure it didn’t harden or congeal. It could quite literally be a pot that cooked real *treif*.”



CALL US, WE WON'T CALL YOU!



“The  does not solicit companies to become kosher certified,” explains Rabbi Eli Lando, Executive Manager of the . “When the agency solicits a company, there is always a chance that there may be a feeling the agency is somewhat beholden to the company and may end up compromising on certain kashrus processes or guidelines to keep the company in the fold. However, when the company is the one that sought out kosher certification, there is a stronger understanding that they need to abide by the rules and regulations.”

THE BACKGROUND CHECK

When a company wishes to get certified by the , rigorous procedures must be followed to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship.



“Essentially, we are running an extensive background check on every company, their procedures, and ingredients we are to certify,” says Rabbi Fogelman. “It’s not like just running your credit; it is more like someone getting security clearance at the CIA. The CIA will study potential recruits for months, interrogating former employers, acquaintances, relatives, friends, and more.”

Even before ingredients are studied and facilities are examined, the  confirms the company operates in an organized, trustworthy manner. An inquiry is made to determine if the company was previously certified by another kosher agency. There is a constant flow of information and a real sense of partnership between the major agencies, and if a company has had its certification revoked or is leaving an agency for any other reason, the  will always communicate with the other agency to ensure there are no red flags.

Even if all the ingredients and production methods are acceptable, the  will also do its best to make sure that the product name and its label are appropriate.. For instance, the 



does not certify recreational marijuana products. There have been numerous instances where marketing campaigns included product labels that would be inappropriate for a kosher home or Shabbos table. Such products are not certified.

THE KOSHER ID


It takes a split second for a consumer to glance at an  symbol and deem a product acceptable. But behind that symbol is a team of well-trained rabbis who work together to ensure that it meets the  kosher standards and a kosher certificate that is signed off by a member of the Executive Vaad HaKashrus that covers every aspect of the product’s life. Like a birth certificate, it tells you where it comes from; like an ID or license, it describes what its appropriate uses are, and like a passport, it shows its travels, journeys, and the associations it has made. Kosher certification is renewed on a yearly basis.

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO YOU KNOW


“We once got a call from one of the largest cereal manufacturers in the country,” says Rabbi Eli Lando, “They were about to run a multi-million-dollar promotional campaign which would have included little sealed packs of marshmallows as a prize inside one of the cereals we certified. The problem was the marshmallow wasn’t kosher.”

Rabbi Don Yoel Levy, OB”M, was unequivocal - they could not include the marshmallows. He understood that at that late stage, there was a chance the  would lose the entire company’s account. Perhaps the  could issue a notice to consumers informing them of the status of the marshmallows and not lose the business of certifying all the other products the company produced. That wasn’t an option.


In the end, the company canceled

the campaign and retained the  certification.


CONFLICT FREE

Numerous safeguards are in place to ensure financial motivations do not get in the way of kashrus standards. The senior rabbis are called Rabbinical Coordinators, or RCs. Every single new company or facility certified by the , even products that do not necessarily require a hechsher, undergoes an in-person inspection by an RC, who creates a detailed report. Field mashgichim are entrusted with the follow up inspections.

All RCs are salaried and receive no commissions for the number of companies or products certified. The RCs who determine the frequency of inspections by our local mashgiach and the guidelines each facility will need to follow are not necessarily privy to the fees the company will be paying. There is nothing to be gained by any rabbi approving or rejecting any particular product.

The RC’s report will then be reviewed by a member of the  Executive Vaad HaKashrus, a board of four executive rabbis who dictate policy and protocol. Every report is given a second set of eyes, even if a report is written by a Vaad member, another rabbi would need to review it to ensure nothing is missed, even inadvertently.

Rabbi Berel Levy, OB”M, instituted a system of outside poskim who answer all halachic queries that require senior adjudication. This is to ensure a completely unbiased view on the matter from a rabbi who sees no personal gain from the products certified.

Transparency is another in a long line of safeguards. Ensuring consumers are up to date on all changes, being straightforward, and having a team dedicated to answering consumers ensures the  must always be open and have an explanation and answer at the ready.



NEVER COMPROMISE

Once a product or facility is approved and certified, the **Ⓚ** relies on surprise in-person visits by its vast team of mashgichim worldwide. Even under the most trying circumstances, for instance, inspecting Chinese facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic (where the mashgiach often required quarantine), or at times of danger to a frum mashgiach, the **Ⓚ** did not and does not compromise on the requirements of surprise and in-person visits when deemed necessary. There were times when mashgichim were stuck in remote locations for weeks on end, but standards were not compromised.

Additionally, an RC visits every facility at least once per year, accompanied by the regular local mashgiach, to ensure full compliance and that no new processes or ingredients have been put into place.

KEEPING THE PEACE

While much effort is made to ensure companies are following protocols and procedures, and tactics like surprise visits make it seem like we are wary of companies knowingly trying to circumvent rules, Rabbi Fogelman insists such instances are extremely rare. “Most companies appreciate high levels of quality. Just as they want their own production to be run most efficiently, they appreciate it when certifying agencies are run efficiently and on top of their game as well. They view the **Ⓚ** similarly to how they view the FDA, USDA, and many other regulatory agencies.”

“If a mistake is found,” says Rabbi Fogelman, “Companies will usually be grateful to the **Ⓚ** for noticing it and allowing them to correct it.” A mistake in kosher protocols could be symptomatic of sloppiness in other areas of production that have little

or nothing to do with kashrus.

“Companies know we’re not out to get them, and we will do our best to assist in any way,” says Dina Fraenkel, Strategic Projects Coordinator. “As long as kashrus is not being compromised in any way, we will do our utmost to help, whether it is by showing them ways to save on the costs of kosher production by certifying an entire facility or production line rather than just a single product, or by devising protocols and methods that are more efficient for kashrus purposes.”

The Tulip Winery in Israel hires individuals with special needs. While a laudable project, many hechsherim refused to certify the company, legitimately citing concerns with the staff who could not be relied upon to follow the strict rules of a kosher winery. When Tulip came to the **Ⓚ**, the **Ⓚ** devised a system that would work, allowing those employees to work with the wine once it had been bottled and sealed.

Rather than close the door out of an abundance of caution, the **Ⓚ** was comfortable devising a plan that would in no way compromise Halacha and assist the company.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

To be qualified as an RC and even a mashgiach, one needs to know far more than just the relevant Halachos. In the world of modern-day food manufacturing, one must be well-versed in food chemistry and know how and why each piece of equipment works. Every RC receives extensive training as an apprentice to a senior RC. Mashgichim accompany RCs and other mashgichim for lengthy training periods.

Like the potential issues in the aforementioned bottle of orange juice, countless challenges present themselves, whether regarding ingredients or the process, which require years of training just to understand. A consumer looking at a product label would have no way of ascertaining the kashrus of the product.

“When you hear about the Iron Dome protecting our brothers and sisters in Israel, what you don’t think about are kashrus implications,” says Rabbi Fogelman.

Enemy missiles that are not predicted to hit civilian locations are often not destroyed. If a missile hits a kosher vineyard and destroys a vine, the vineyard will replant the vine. However, it is forbidden to eat the fruit of a tree within its first three years (*orlah*), and as such, the **Ⓚ** must keep clear and detailed records of every single row of vines in the vineyard, knowing when each one was planted and if any are ever destroyed. “Some of the tools we use to keep track of the vines are detailed maps and drones,” says Rabbi Fogelman. “Would you ever imagine that working in kosher certification would require training in drone operation?”

THE KOSHER BUSINESS

Behind every **Ⓚ** symbol is a team of more than 100 full-time employees in Brooklyn, Los Angeles, Mexico, and affiliate offices in Israel, Belgium, Brazil and China, along with hundreds of part-time employees worldwide, who help bring that product to your table.

The next time you pick up a glass, whether it is filled with wine, orange juice, or any other beverage, notice the kosher symbol. Think about the possible story of this symbol. Would you have ever imagined a hechsher manning a fleet of drones to track bombed vineyards? Would you have considered the hechsher had to track tanker trucks and ship hauls and their cleaning protocols?

No matter where your imagination takes you, the **Ⓚ** will be there every step of the journey. **Ⓚ**





Sourdough Cinnamon Buns

By Sarah Leitner

Creator of The Sourdough Institute

SpiceandZest.com | [@spiceandzest](#)

SERVES 9

These sourdough cinnamon buns bring together the comforting sweetness of classic cinnamon rolls with the added depth of flavor and health benefits of a sourdough starter. Soft, naturally leavened, and topped with optional cream cheese frosting, they're perfect for breakfast, brunch, or a cozy dessert. A delicious treat that everyone will love, with a wholesome twist.

DOUGH

200 g active sourdough starter

500 g all-purpose flour

50 g honey

80 g coconut oil or oil of your choice

185 g warm milk or any milk alternative

3 eggs

5 g salt

FILLING

200 g brown sugar

35 g melted butter

1 Tbsp cinnamon

CREAM CHEESE FROSTING (OPTIONAL)

4 oz cream cheese

3/4 cup powdered sugar

1 Tbsp milk

1. In a stand mixer with a dough hook, combine all the ingredients for the dough. Knead the dough on medium speed for 5-8 minutes until smooth and elastic.
2. Transfer the dough to a bowl, cover it, and let it rise at room temperature for 8-10 hours or in the fridge overnight.

If you refrigerated the dough, let it sit at room temperature for about 2 hours before rolling.

3. On a well-floured surface, roll out the risen dough into a 14x9 inch rectangle.
4. Spread softened butter over the dough, leaving a ¼ inch margin at the far end.
5. Mix together brown sugar and cinnamon in a bowl and sprinkle over the buttered dough.
6. Roll up the dough tightly, starting from the 9-inch side, and place seam-side down, seal the edges.
7. Cut the roll into 1 inch slices using a floss or sharp knife.
8. Place the cinnamon buns in a greased 9x13 inch baking pan lined with parchment paper and let the buns rise for another 30-45 minutes
9. Preheat oven to 350°F and bake for 20-25 minutes or until slightly golden brown at the edges.
10. Allow to cool for 5-10 minutes before frosting.

Optional cream cheese frosting

1. Mix together the cream cheese, powdered sugar, and milk until smooth. Spread the frosting over the warm buns

Notes: Sticky Dough- If the dough feels sticky after mixing, don't worry. transfer it to a bowl and allow it to rise it will transform into a smooth and manageable dough.

Rolling the Dough- Be sure to flour your work surface generously. Lightly flour the top of the dough as well to prevent it from sticking to the rolling pin.

Handling Butter- If working with soft butter is challenging, feel free to melt the butter completely before spreading it on the dough.

Baking Time- Remove the cinnamon buns from the oven after 35 minutes. They may appear slightly underbaked, but leaving them in longer can cause them to overbake and become too crispy.

LOOK:

WHISKY



By Rabbi Sholom Ber Hendel,
 Executive Vaad HaKashrus

WHAT IS SCOTCH WHISKY?

Scotch whisky is a distilled alcoholic beverage, made exclusively in Scotland, from fermented grains, water, and yeast, and aged in wooden casks.

Single malt Scotch whisky is made entirely with malted barley from a single distillery that was aged in multiple casks, while single cask Scotch whisky is made from whisky that was aged in a single cask. Blended whisky is made from a blend of single malt and grain whiskies from multiple distilleries that were aged in different casks. Blended whisky accounts for the majority of Scotch whisky production.

HOW IS SCOTCH WHISKY MADE?

MALTING: Barley is steeped in water to induce sprouting, which activates natural enzymes that convert starches into sugars. The malted barley is dried at the end of the process.

MASHING: Malted barley (with other grains, depending on the desired product) is ground and mixed with hot water in a large vessel to extract starch from the grain and the starches are broken down into sugar by the enzymes to create a sugary liquid called wort.

FERMENTATION: Yeast consumes the sugars in the wort and converts the sugary liquid into alcohol.

DISTILLATION: The fermented liquid is heated to the boiling point of alcohol (173°F), which is lower than the boiling point of water (212°F). The alcohol evaporates, separates from the water and impurities, and is collected in the condenser where it cools and returns to a liquid state. The process is repeated, and the resulting product is called “new mix spirit,” which is 70% alcohol.¹ The liquid is then diluted with water to reach 60% alcohol.

¹ Whisky is only distilled to 70% alcohol, so the flavor of the grain remains

AGING: The “new make spirit” is stored in oak casks for a minimum of three years. During this time, the wood of the cask interacts with the whisky and improves the flavors and colors. The longer the whisky spends in the wood cask, the more flavorful the whisky gets.

Virgin (new) oak casks are not recommended for aging whisky. The strong flavors from the wood can overpower the spirits, so the most common casks used in the industry are casks that were previously used for aging bourbon² or sherry wine³.

BOTTLING: At the end of the aging process, the whisky is usually blended (with whisky aged in a different type of cask, a different fill⁴, or, in the case of blended whisky, single malt and grain whisky from multiple distilleries), diluted with water to 40% alcohol, and bottled.

IS SCOTCH WHISKY KOSHER?

The “new make spirit” does not pose any kashrus issues. The age-old discussion revolves around aging the whisky in casks that were previously used for wine.

Non-kosher wine is *stam yainam* which is prohibited *mi'di'rabbanan*. Once it has sat in the cask for 24 hours, the wine has been absorbed through *k'visha* (soaking) into the walls of the cask. Once anything else sits in the cask for 24 hours, the new product is *kovush* and absorbs the non-kosher *ta'am* (flavor) of the wine. In general, there is a leniency that permits the product (after the fact) if the

in the whisky. This is different from vodka, which is distilled to nearly 100% alcohol.

² The American Bourbon Act requires that bourbon be aged in new, charred American white oak barrels, also known as “virgin oak” casks. After one use the casks can no longer be used for American Bourbon and are sold for about \$100 in Scotland. They are the most used casks for aging Scotch whisky due to the low cost.

³ Sherry casks are used because they add depth and richness of flavor. The usage of sherry casks began in the middle of the 19th century when empty casks from the southern England bottling lines were sold to Scottish whisky distilleries. The supply of sherry casks has dried up due to Spain passing regulations requiring all sherry to be bottled on its shores. Today these casks are made to order and cost about \$1,500 each.

⁴ Casks used to age whisky for the first time are referred to as first fill, and then the cask is emptied and filled with new make spirit for a second time (second fill). Casks may be filled a third time (third fill).



second soaking is not within 24 hours of the first, because the flavor is considered pogum, blemished, and does not impart a positive flavor.

Whisky aged in wine casks poses a kashrus challenge. Wine has a different din because the flavor is *lishvach* (a positive flavor) and the leniency of *eino ben yomo*—not within 24 hours—does not apply to wine. The casks need to sit unused for 12 months before being filled with a kosher liquid, at which time the wine flavor is no longer a concern. In addition, whisky is considered *davar charif* (sharp food), and the sharpness of the *davar charif* is always considered *lishvach*, even if 24 hours have passed.

Some Rabbonim permit the use of whisky aged in sherry casks based on the following rulings: The Shulchan Oruch (Yoreh Deah 137:4) says that clean vessels previously used for *stam yainam* can be used to store water, beer, and other beverages. The Noda BiYehuda in Ma'adura Tinyana (Yoreh Deah 58) wrote that the same applies to whisky – one can put it in a vessel that absorbed wine through cold *k'visha*, because the wine imparts negative flavor (*pogum*) to the other beverage.

Others argue and say that applying the ruling of the Noda BiYehuda to Scotch whisky is difficult for the following reasons:

1. The Noda BiYehuda writes, in siman 67, that if a barrel had contained a wine-based hard liquor, which was made from *stam yainam*, the beverage might impart a positive flavor to the other drinks which would pose a kashrus problem. It's important to note that sherry is fortified wine and contains about 18% alcohol content, which is achieved by adding grape-based alcohol to wine that was 6-12% alcohol. Maybe fortified wine is considered an alcoholic beverage, which the Noda BiYehuda clearly prohibits.

2. In addition, it is difficult to argue that wine imparts a negative flavor to whisky. Companies are willing to pay much more for a custom-made sherry cask when they could be getting much cheaper bourbon casks, and they advertise the use of a sherry cask, so how can we say that wine imparts a negative flavor, as it did in the time of the Noda BiYehuda? (It is possible that whisky during the time of the Noda BiYehuda was completely purified to nearly 100% alcohol which is a different product than whisky today, which is only distilled to 70% alcohol, and maybe even the Noda BiYehuda would agree that wine enhances modern whisky.)⁵

Even if we are concerned about the absorption of the wine into the casks, there is another plausible reason to be lenient. There is a *machlokes* about how much wine was absorbed into the cask and according to the Taz and the Chacham Tzvi, only the outermost layer (*k'dei klippah*) of the container is considered to have absorbed the non-kosher flavor of the *stam yainam*. If we follow that opinion, there will always be sixty times as much kosher liquid inside the cask as the tiny amount of cask material that is considered non-kosher, and it should not be an issue. However, not all poskim agree with the opinion of the Taz and Chacham Tzvi. The opinion of the Shach, Pri Megadim and Chochmas Adam is to follow the opinion of the Issur V'Heter that we need to assume the cask walls fully absorb the flavor of the wine and calculate *bittul* accordingly. Many poskim follow the opinion of the Shach.

Once we understand the concern that wine can impart a positive flavor, there is a potential to apply the leniency

⁵ Others will argue and say that once the ruling is that wine imparts a negative flavor to whisky, it does not make a difference what modern professionals say about the matter.



of bittul. The general Halacha of bittul is that one needs sixty times as much of a kosher item to nullify the non-kosher item mixed in with it. Regarding wine vessels, however, the ratio changes to 6:1. While the Shach holds that this leniency only applies to water placed in wine barrels, the majority of poskim, including the Igros Moshe and the Minchas Yitzchok, follow the ruling of the Taz, who says that this leniency applies to any beverage.

The ruling of the Minchas Yitzchok (1902-1989) was accepted as the mainstream approach to sherry casks. He permitted the whisky for two reasons: Firstly, there is certainly six times (the ratio applicable to wine), and maybe even sixty times, as much kosher liquid as there is wood that absorbed the non-kosher wine. Secondly, he writes that the flavor of the wine is not tasted in the whisky; it's a new flavor that is a combination of the wood, the wine, the air, and the grain, and therefore it can be considered *zeh v'zeh gorem* (the kosher and the non-kosher flavors combine to create a taste) and the wine is not generating the flavor on its own. If you can identify the taste imparted by the wine, then the wine—however little of it there might be—is considered a *milsa d'avida letaima*—something whose purpose is to add flavor, and it would never be botul, even in sixty times as much kosher liquid.

In recent years, there have been questions about the ruling of the Minchas Yitzchok and whether he was provided with an accurate picture of whisky production and aging methods. Understanding the history of whisky production can put these questions to rest.

In the time of the Minchas Yitzchok, almost all Scotch whisky available was blended Scotch whisky. Single malt Scotch, which is highly sought after today, was not available during that time.

When making a blended whisky, even when some of the whisky was aged in sherry casks, it would be an

extremely low percentage of the blend and most of the whisky would be aged in bourbon casks. When calculating the total amount of whisky plus the added water there is almost always more than sixty times against the wood of the sherry casks.

This is different from single malt Scotch, which has a much higher percentage of Scotch aged in sherry casks. Because most of the blend is aged in sherry casks it is unlikely to have a ratio of 60:1 of the liquid versus the wood of the sherry casks, and in some cases, when the usage of sherry casks is extremely high, there might not even be a ratio of 6:1.⁶

The manufacturers of single malt Scotch aged in sherry casks specifically tout the benefits imparted to the whisky from the sherry and are clearly looking for the sherry flavor. Therefore, both aspects of the Minchas Yitzchok's ruling still apply to blended whisky, but not to single malt Scotch aged in sherry casks.

It is always best to buy kosher-certified whisky, or at least to avoid whisky when the label mentions sherry, port, oloroso, Madeira, or any words that represent aging in wine casks such as, double matured, finished, or European oak. The company is advertising and charging a premium for these features. If those phrases are not mentioned, the assumption is that it does not contain whisky matured in wine casks in a great enough quantity for concern. Even though it is not the norm, blended whisky may contain a large amount of whisky matured in sherry casks so the label should be checked, just as one would do for single malt Scotch. (K)

⁶ The casks are thick, and the average volume of wood for a 500-liter cask is 136 liters. The whisky is typically diluted upon maturation with an additional 250 liters of water to reach 40% alcohol, but even 750 total liters of the finished product is not six times greater than the volume of the wood (136 liters) if not mixed with whisky aged in bourbon casks. Single malt scotch is often matured in smaller casks, and those have an even higher ratio of wood to liquid.

CHASSIDIC INSIGHTS: TESHUVAH & CONNECTION

(Adapted from the maamar of the Lubavitcher Rebbe entitled *Vichol Adam, 5723, and Sichos Simchas Beis HaShoevah, 5723*)

THE ESSENCE OF THE DAY

The *Talmud* relates¹ the following difference of opinion with regard to Gd's pardoning of our sins on Yom Kippur: Our Sages maintain that "Yom Kippur atones only for those who repent," while Rebbe [Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi] states: "Whether or not one repents, Yom Kippur atones," because "the essence of the day brings atonement." The *Halachah* is decided according to our Sages.²

It is not that the Sages differ with Rebbe [Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi] and feel that "the essence of the day" is not powerful enough in its own right to bring about atonement. On the contrary, they also maintain that it is "the essence of the day" which atones.³ For with *teshuvah* alone, a person cannot reach the level of atonement attained by virtue of "the essence of the day."

The difference between Rebbe and our Sages is one of mechanics: how is it possible for the atonement brought about by the essence of the day to be achieved? Rebbe maintains that when Yom Kippur comes, the power of "the essence of the day" is so great that even when a Jew does not repent, his sins are washed away.

Our Sages, by contrast, maintain⁴ that for the atonement brought about by the essence of the day to be effective, it must be accompanied by *teshuvah*. This *teshuvah*, however, is no more than a preparatory step, for the atonement brought about by the essence of the day is far more encompassing than that brought about by *teshuvah*.

THREE LEVELS OF CONNECTION

Atonement means more than withholding punishment for a person's sins. The implication is that all blemishes and scars brought about by the sins are washed away from the person's soul.⁵ And in a consummate sense, *teshuvah* means not only that no trace of sin is left, but that the sin itself is transformed and considered a merit.⁶

When a Jew returns to Gd with remorse over the sins he has committed, we can understand how this dynamic operates. His feelings of regret tear away the pleasure he experienced at the time of sin, and this purifies and washes away the traces of evil from his soul.⁷

What's more, the distance created by sin spurs the soul to a greater thirst for Gdliness. For this reason, after *teshuvah*, the sin can be considered a merit.⁸

But when atonement is brought about by "the essence of the day," how can it result in such a process of purification? It is possible to understand that such atonement will prevent punishment, but how can it purify our souls?

This question applies even according to our Sages, for they postulate that the atonement of Yom Kippur has a more encompassing effect than the Divine service of *teshuvah*. Surely, this question applies according to Rebbe, who maintains that Yom Kippur brings about atonement even without *teshuvah*.

The above question can be resolved by coming to appreciate the various levels of connection our souls share with Gd. There is one level which is dependent on our observance of Gd's commandments. It is established by a person's acceptance of the yoke of heaven, and his willingness to do what Gd asks of him.

There is a second and deeper level of connection, one which is reflected by the fact that even a Jew who has broken Gd's commandments and cast off the yoke of heaven will feel remorse and turn to Gd in *teshuvah*. Because *teshuvah* comes from a level of connection which is deeper than that established through the

1 Shavuos 13a.

2 Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuvah 1:3; Hilchos Shegagos 3:10; cited by the Shulchan Aruch HaRav 607:16.

3 This is reflected in the fact that the Rambam (loc. cit.:3-4) uses the expression "the essence of Yom Kippur atones," although he accepts the position of our Sages.

4 Note *Derech Mitzvosecha, Mitzvas Eglah Arufah*, which explains our Sages' position slightly differently.

5 *Tanya, Iggeres HaTeshuvah*, ch. 1.

6 *Yoma* 86b.

7 See *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 38b, which describes this as the process of purging "the soul of the kelipah"; and the act of confession as "destroying the body of the kelipah."

8 *Tanya*, ch. 7.

observance of the *mitzvos*, it has the power to correct and wash away the spiritual blemishes caused by sin.⁹ Sin weakens the soul's connection to Gd, and *teshuvah* restores it.

Nevertheless, even this inner connection has a certain limit, as it is manifest in the process of *teshuvah*.

There is a third, and even deeper level: the bond shared between the essence of the soul and Gd's essence. This bond knows no measure at all, nor is there any process through which it is manifest. It is therefore above even *teshuvah*.

This level of connection cannot be established through our activities and Divine service, for all mortal activities, however lofty, have a limit. Instead, it is an innate, natural connection stemming from the fact that every Jew possesses a soul which is "an actual part of Gd from above,"¹⁰ and even while enfolded in the body, it "clings and cleaves to You, its oneness affirming Your oneness."¹¹

Since this level of connection is above all measure and form, it cannot be established through our Divine service, and cannot be weakened by a lack of service or even by sin.

This is the meaning of the phrase "the essence of the day brings about atonement." On Yom Kippur, the Jews' essential bond with Gd is revealed, and this washes away all blemishes.

(As mentioned above, the difference between the views of Rebbe and the Sages hinges on whether or not *teshuvah* is necessary for this level to be revealed. They both agree that it is not *teshuvah* which effects the atonement of Yom Kippur, but rather that atonement stems from the essence of the day.)

On that level of the soul where sins have an effect and can cause a blemish, atonement must be achieved through man's conscious turning to Gd in *teshuvah*.¹² This arouses a deeper connection with Gd, which breaks through any obstacles that might prevent such a bond. The atonement brought about by Yom Kippur, by contrast, comes through the revelation of a bond which never allowed for the *possibility* of a blemish.¹³

WITHIN THE HOLY OF HOLIES

The above concepts are also reflected in the service of the High Priest on Yom Kippur. One of the fundamental elements of the service was his entry into the Holy of Holies. Concerning this entry, it is written:¹⁴ "No man shall be in the Tent of Meeting." The *Jerusalem Talmud* states¹⁵ that

**THIS IS THE
MEANING OF THE
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THE JEWISH PEOPLE
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this applies even to those about whom it is said:¹⁶ "the likeness of their face is like the face of a man," i.e., the Holy *Chayos*, the highest level of angels.¹⁷ When the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies, not even the angels may be present.

What does this imply? That Yom Kippur involves the essential bond between Gd and the Jewish people, as represented by the High Priest who serves as their agent; "Israel is alone with Gd."¹⁸

Moreover, the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies in the era of the Second *Beis HaMikdash* as well, when the Holy Ark was not there.

Implied is that the High Priest entered into a bond with Gd that is above even the level of engraved letters in the Torah.¹⁹

There is a level of *teshuvah* mandated by the *Torah* and a level of *teshuvah* above the *Torah*. The difference between the two is that the *teshuvah* mandated by the *Torah* reflects a revealed level of the soul and of Gd. It is true that even the level of *teshuvah* mandated by the *Torah* is above the level of the *Torah* itself. For that reason, *teshuvah* can atone for blemishes in the observance of the *Torah's mitzvos* — including even the *mitzvah* of *Torah* study.

Nevertheless, the *teshuvah* mandated by the *Torah* reflects dimensions of the soul and of Gd which are revealed. The *teshuvah* which transcends the *Torah*, by contrast, points to how the soul is bound up with Gd's essence, and is above all revelation.

In the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*, the Jews' essential bond with Gd was revealed through the entry of the High Priest into the Holy of Holies. Our Sages teach²⁰ that our prayers take the place of the sacrifices. As such, it is our prayers which today express this connection.

To explain: Yom Kippur is the only day of the year on which we are obligated to recite five different prayer services. These five services reflect the five levels of the soul: *nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshamah*, *chayah*, and *yechidah*.²¹ *Neilah*, the fifth prayer service, which is recited only on Yom Kippur, thus reflects the level of *yechidah*, the aspect of the soul which is bound to Gd with singular oneness. At this level, nothing besides Gd and the souls of Israel is of concern.

This is the meaning of the word *neilah* — that the gates are locked; no one else is allowed in. The Jewish people are alone with Gd.

This degree of connection is revealed in the *Neilah* prayer.²² In a more general sense, however, it applies throughout the day of Yom Kippur;²³ for Yom Kippur is "a day on which five prayer services are required." Although each service has its time (the evening service, the morning service, etc.), the entire day is "a day on which five prayer services are required," i.e., the fifth level, the level of *yechidah* shines throughout the day.

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9 Similarly, in the spiritual realms, *teshuvah* reaches a level above Gd's desire for the observance of the *mitzvos* (*Likkutei Torah, Vayikra*, p. 26c, *Derech Mitzvosecha, Mitzvas Vidui U'Teshuvah*).

10 Tanya, ch. 2.

11 Sukkos liturgy, Seder Tehillat HaShem, p. 327.

12 See the sichah to Parshas Vaes'chanan in this series, which states that because the soul of a person who repents reaches a level higher than that of a perfect tzaddik, one might conclude that the blemish brought about by sin also brings the soul to a level higher than that realized by a tzaddik.

13 These two levels of *teshuvah* and Yom Kippur reflect the differences between the *Torah's* response to a sinner (Yalkut Shimoni, Tehillim, Remez 702; Yerushalmi, Makkos 2:6): "Let him bring a guilt offering, and thus receive atonement," and that given by the Holy One, blessed be He: "Let him turn in *teshuvah* and receive atonement." (See also the letter of Tishrei 8, 5712 printed in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. IV, p. 135a.)

Although the course of action suggested by the *Torah* also involves *teshuvah*, the agent of atonement is the sacrifice. The *teshuvah* causes the willful sins to be considered unintentional, and a sacrifice can bring about atonement for unintentional sins. (See the maamar entitled *VeChol Adam*, delivered by the Tzemach Tzedek, sec. 4 — Or HaTorah, *Devarim*, p. 1557ff.)

Moreover, such atonement is not complete, for the *teshuvah* mandated by the *Torah* relates to the will of the *Torah*, but reflects "the depth of the will," or "the master of the will" (see the sichah for Rosh HaShanah in this series). This is possible because the *Torah* relates to the middle vector, which reveals levels which transcend the spiritual cosmos. It does, however, relate to those limits, and thus has a measure. The *teshuvah* prompted by the Holy One, blessed be He, stems from an essential delight which is above the will entirely, like the *teshuvah* of Yom Kippur. This level has no limits. It atones for even purposeful transgressions, and indeed, transforms them into merits.

14 *Vayikra* 16:17.

15 *Yoma* 1:5. See also the *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 15b and Vol. I, p. 208b, and the conclusion of the maamar entitled *VeChol Adam* cited above.

16 *Yechezkel* 1:10.

17 Rambam, *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* 2:7. See, however, *Zohar*, Vol. II, p. 43a. See also Tanya, ch. 39. (Note also the *Raya Mehemna* cited there; (this apparently refers to the *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 225a) and the *Eitz Chayim* (apparently, *Shaar* 50, ch. 7).)

18 *Zohar* III, p. 32a.

19 [In the Holy Ark, were contained the Tablets on which the Ten Commandments were engraved.]

20 *Berachos* 26b.

21 *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar*, p. 86b.

22 For that reason, the fundamental aspect of the atonement of Yom Kippur is granted at the conclusion of the day (See *Taanis* 26b; *Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, p. 39d). See also *Kuntres HaAvodah*, sec. 5, which speaks about "special times, e.g., the time of sounding the shofar, and *Neilah* on Yom Kippur."

23 We find a parallel to this phenomenon with regard to *Shabbos* — this is indeed fitting, because Yom Kippur is described (*Vayikra* 23:32) as *Shabbos Shabbason*. *Shabbos* is characterized by the quality of oneg, "delight." This applies to *Shabbos* as a whole. Nevertheless, the ultimate level of oneg, the level described as *raaveh dichol raavin*, is revealed at the conclusion of the day. See the *Siddur Im Dach, Derushei Seudos Shabbos*.

Rosh Hashanah is a two-day Yom Tov, but Chazal refer to it as one long day. It says in sefarim that the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah are linked to the Aseres HaDibros. Since we heard the first two commandments directly from Hashem (the rest were said by Moshe because the intensity was too great), and they were said at the same time, *b'dibur echad* (as one), they are considered as one. Therefore, the two days of Rosh Hashanah are also considered as one. Even in Eretz Yisroel, Rosh Hashanah is a two-day Yom Tov, which shows us that the first two commandments, no matter where you are in the world, are always at the forefront of Yiddishkeit. There's no doubt, and no difference. – Reb Yonason Eibshitz, Yaaros Devash

Many communities say the tefillah of L'David Mizmor on the Yomim Noraim during Ma'ariv. To understand why, we need to first understand, How can we ask forgiveness from Hashem? A king cannot forgo his own honor.

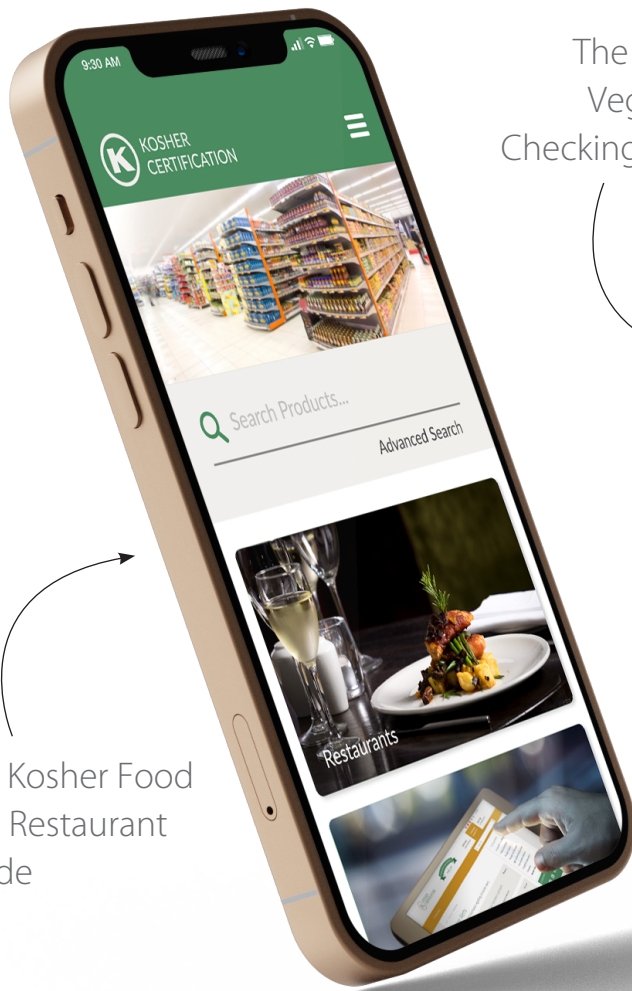
”מלך שמחל על כבודו אין כבודו מחול.”

The Baal Shem Tov explains that the reason a king cannot forgo his own honor is because Hashem gave a Jewish king honor through the commandment that we should have a king and honor him; the honor does not actually belong to the king, since it is bestowed by Hashem. Here, in L'David Mizmor, we are talking about Hashem Himself. Hashem can forgo his own honor and forgive us. Therefore, we start with this kapital proclaiming that Hashem is the King of the World. It is also written that at this time, when we say this kapital, that our parnassa for the year is determined by Hashem. Now we understand why; we are proclaiming Hashem as our King who is in control of everything in the world.

Why do we dip an apple in honey and not another fruit?

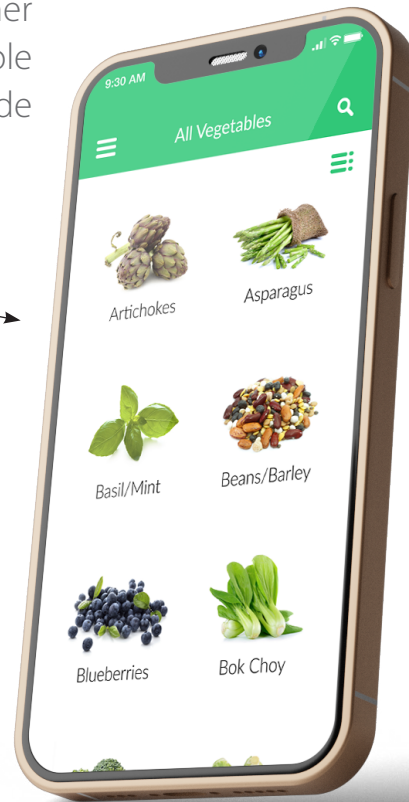
1. Jews are compared to an apple. Like the Gemara says (Shabbos 88), just like an apple starts to bud before its leaves grow, at Matan Torah the Jews said na'aseh before nishmah. Just like the Jews accepted the Torah without knowing the details, Hashem should grant us a sweet year even without examining the details of our past deeds. - Admur Mi Mishklotz
2. When Yaakov came to get the brochos from Yitzchok, Yitzchok said, “Come close to me.” When Yaakov came close, Yitzchok said, “I smell the scent of an orchard that G-d has blessed.” Rashi explains that this refers to an apple orchard. This is the reason we dip an apple in the honey, so that we can secure all of Hashem's brochos like Yaakov did, and they shouldn't be given away to others. - Ben Ish Chai

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