



# KOSHER SPIRIT

CERTIFIED SOUL NUTRITION

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KISLEV 5782



א פריילעכן חנוכה

WISHING YOU A HAPPY CHANUKAH



# KOSHER SPIRIT



is dedicated to

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

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

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photo credit: Marko Dasher

**Dear Reader,**

We are now well into the shmitta year and it's the perfect time to reflect on the spiritual side of shmitta, a time when we take a break from the daily grind and chaos and strengthen our emunah and bitachon in Hashem.

I can't help but appreciate how appropriate it is that the shmitta

year comes right after one of the most challenging periods in recent memory. How comforting it was for us to finally gather in person once again for our annual international Mashgiach Conference, to thank our dedicated mashgichim and rabbis personally for all they have done throughout the past many months to maintain the highest standards of kashrus for every single one of us. Some of the mashgichim spent months in foreign countries and weeks in quarantine and conforming to all of the health rules and regulations for every country and for every manufacturing facility that they inspected just to ensure kosher without compromise. I would like to thank all of our in-house staff as well, for all the remote working, for all the long phone calls, and for all of the Zoom meetings. We are happy and grateful that almost everyone is back in person in the office.

In this Chanukah issue you can read Rabbi Teller's article about the challenges of food grade oil production, you can find Rabbi Eidelman's article and get a deeper understanding of the intricacy and complicated rules and regulations of shmitta, and part one of Rabbi Chanowitz's article about vegetable infestation.

Wishing you and your families a joyful Chanukah filled with light and peace.

**Rabbi Chaim Fogelman**

Editor in Chief, Executive Kashrus Vaad

# What's the Brocha? granola bars



By Rabbi Sholom  
Ber Lepkivker  
Ⓚ Rabbinic  
Coordinator

**G**

ranola is made from oats which were dehulled (the husk was peeled off), steamed with direct steam, toasted in an oven and rolled with rollers. Granola bars are essentially whole oats which are combined with other ingredients,

including syrups or binders, and are cooled or baked to achieve the desired shape.

Some poskim rule that the **steaming** and then **toasting** of the granola is considered cooking and confers the status of “*daisa*”<sup>1</sup> (porridge) and require the brocha of mezonos and a brocha *acharonah* of *al hamichya*. Most poskim, however, are of the opinion that these steps are insufficient to be considered cooking and, therefore, the brocha is *ha'adamah*. This is the prevalent Halachic opinion.

If the granola was **baked**, another question is raised. Since liquid is added to the slurry before baking (making it sticky) is it still considered cooking and, therefore, mezonos? Although a significant amount of liquid is usually needed to make something considered “cooked”, the use of a small amount of liquid could be potentially considered frying, which is considered a type of cooking<sup>2</sup>. If a granola bar is considered cooked, cooked grain of the “five kinds” of grain is considered porridge and requires the blessing of mezonos<sup>3</sup>. This is especially true considering that the bar was baked, which according to most poskim, is enough for it to be mezonos. Therefore, the brocha on a baked granola bar is mezonos and the brocha *acharonah* is *al hamichya*.

If the granola is **not baked or cooked**, the brocha before eating is *ha'adamah*. When it comes to the brocha *acharonah*, there is an opinion that says that one should say the special blessing<sup>4</sup> that is used for the Shivas HaMinim (which includes oats). Since the usual version of this brocha only addresses fruits that grow on trees (*al ha'eitz*), one should refrain from eating a *kezayis* (27 dense cubic centimeters<sup>5</sup>) in seven<sup>6</sup> minutes, so that the brocha *acharonah* will be *borei nefashos* or eat it as part of a meal that includes bread. If one did eat a *kezayis* within seven minutes, the brocha *acharonah* should still be *borei nefashos*.<sup>7</sup>

1 ראה סדר ברכות הנהנין לאדמו"ר הוקן פ"א סי' ח

2 ראה שם פ"ב סי' י"א

3 Although the brocha is mezonos, there is no concern with Pas Yisroel.

4 שם בש"ט ר"ת

5 1.64 inches

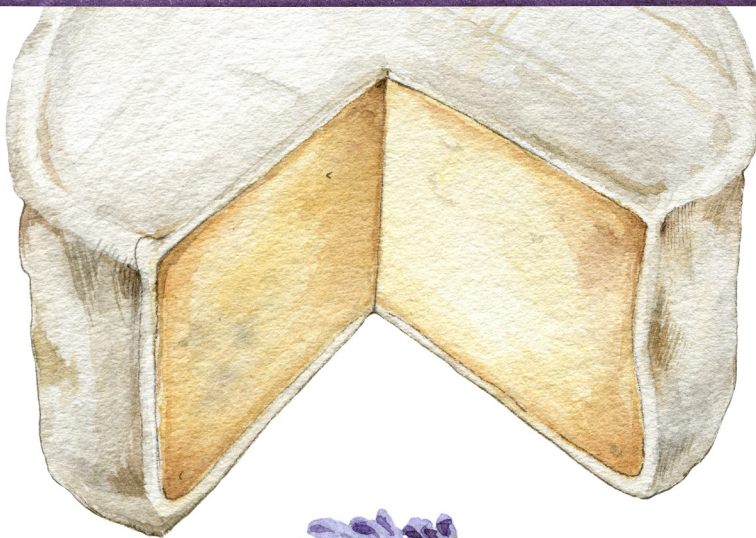
6 Per the opinion of the קדוה הניב. Other opinions say that it's around 4 minutes.

7 שם





# Making Kosher Cheese



## RABBI SHLOMO WEINFELD

Ⓚ Executive Kashrus Vaad

**S** hulchan Oruch Hilchos Chanuka mentions the custom to eat dairy foods during Chanukah, based on a great miracle that occurred and is retold in the Midrash. A Greek general, Holofernes, and his troops laid siege on a large Jewish city called Bethulia and when food and water were nearly depleted many residents demanded that they surrender to the enemy. The leaders of the city requested five days to attempt to fight and daven for salvation.

Yehudis, a young widow who resided in the city, and a daughter of

Yochanan Kohen Gadol, used her beauty and wit to befriend the general and gain access to the enemy camp. One evening she was invited to a feast with the general and agreed to join him only if she could bring her own kosher food. She prepared hard cheese and strong aged wine. The salty cheese caused the general to feel very thirsty and tired, so Yehudis offered him plenty of wine and the general fell into a deep sleep. Yehudis seized the opportunity and with the general's own sword she cut off his head. She wrapped the severed head in a cloth and left, telling the other soldiers that

the general was sleeping and should not be disturbed. After arriving home, Yehudis showed the general's head to the leaders of the city and encouraged them to attack the enemy. When the enemy soldiers saw them attack and went to alert their general they realized he was dead and fled in fear, and the Yidden were saved.

In honor of Yehudis's cunning victory courtesy of the cheese, let's take a look at an integral part of the cheese making process. While today the vast majority of commercial kosher cheeses are made with microbial (synthetic) rennet, yet there are a



few die-hard cheesemakers who still produce the traditional way, especially in Italy.

The process of cheese making is fascinating and one can plainly see the wonders in Hashem's creations. The stomach lining of calves produces an enzyme that causes their mother's milk to coagulate and turn into cheese, which digests more slowly and provides a longer period of nourishment than liquid milk. As the calves mature and begin to wean off their mother's milk, this enzyme is diminished and has limited effect.

In earlier generations cheese was produced by mixing rennet (the lining of the calf's stomach) into milk and the enzymes would coagulate the milk and turn it into hard cheese. The obvious question is how can one make kosher cheese? Would this not be violation of mixing milk and meat?<sup>1</sup>

Milk and meat are mentioned as forbidden in the Torah three times.<sup>2</sup> Once is for the prohibition of cooking, once for eating and once for receiving benefit<sup>3</sup>. Adding rennet into milk to make cheese is not considered "derech bishul" (the usual way of cooking) so it is not prohibited according to the Torah.



According to the Shulchan Oruch<sup>4</sup>, the stomach lining of a kosher, properly shechted calf can be used as rennet for kosher cheese making once it has been dried to the point that it is like wood and has absolutely no moisture or taste, because it comes from a kosher source. It is also written that one may not use the stomach lining of a non-kosher animal or one that has not been properly shechted and processed. Since the source is not kosher, the resulting rennet is not permissible from the start. And, since the non-kosher item is what causes the cheese to coagulate, even though the amount added is minute, it is considered a Davar Ha'Mamid (a crucial part of the process) which cannot be nullified (botul b'shishim).<sup>5</sup>


Today animal-based enzymes are used only to produce special cheeses (e.g. Par-

migiano Reggiano and grana padano) in specific regions in Italy. The process is long and complex and we assign a dedicated mashgiach at the slaughterhouse to mark the stomachs that are deemed Glatt Kosher. The approved stomachs are then cleaned from all forbidden fats, salted properly and chemically processed so the stomach is rendered inedible. During the process the enzymes are extracted and used along with other processing agents to make hard cheese.

The rededication of the Beis HaMikdash, made possible by Yehudis's victory, still has a spiritual relevance today. Our shuls and Batei Medrashos, where we daven and learn Torah, are considered Mikdashai Me'at (small temples). The Gemara teaches that our davening has taken the place of korbanos and one who studies the laws of korbanos is considered as one who actually brought that korbon. In addition, every Jewish home must be a place worthy of the Shechinah, as the pasuk says: "Make for me a Mikdash and I will dwell among them". The pasuk does not say "dwell in it", it says "dwell in them", indicating that every one of us can be a receptacle for the Shechinah.

Specifically, this year, the year of Shmitta when we are commanded to pause and refrain from working the ground, is an opportunity for rededication and taking the opportunity to become closer to Hashem by learning Torah and doing more mitzvos.

At the , we had the merit to see a living example of spiritual dedication from Rabbi Don Yoel Levy OB" M. The wisdom and kedushah of Torah was his guiding light, and he dedicated his time to learning both early in the morning and late at night. He stood at the forefront of upholding the highest standards of kashrus with mesiras nefesh, traveling to facilities throughout the globe and enduring long and difficult trips. The  Executive Vaad HaKashrus and the Rabbinic Coordinators are proud to continue his legacy and uphold the rigorous standards that Rabbi Levy pioneered.

May we merit the fulfillment of the prophecy of עפר שני ורנו שני עפר with the coming of Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash HaShlishi very soon. 

1 For an in-depth discussion of Gevinas Yisroel, please see Kosher Spirit Chanukah 5781.

2 Shemos 23:19; Shemos 34:26; Devarim 14:21.

3 Yoreh Deah 87:1.

4 Yoreh Deah 87:11

5 The Anshei Keneses HaGedolah placed a gezeira on non-Jewish cheese because the source of the rennet (kosher or non-kosher) is unknown.



# HOT WATER

When drinking hot water, the temperature should be between 120-140°F to avoid burns.

Drinking hot water can temporarily relieve sore throat and congestion.

Drinking hot water activates the endocrine system and can help the body release toxins.

Adding a squeeze of lemon provides a boost of vitamin C.

Drinking hot water can aid in muscle relaxation which can improve sleep and reduce muscle pain.

Hot water can aid digestion by helping the intestines move waste.

Drinking hot water first thing in the morning can help promote weight loss by increasing metabolism and kick-starting the digestive system.

Hot water increases circulation and may help improve blood pressure.

# AN OVERVIEW OF THE LAWS OF SHMITTA

We are a quarter of the way through a shmitta year and even those of us residing outside of Eretz Yisroel are impacted by hilchos shmitta. Shmitta means “to leave”. We leave the land and its fruits, as well as loans which we have given to others.

There are many explanations as to why Hashem commanded B’nei Yisroel to observe shmitta years.

**In Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 84) the author gives three reasons:**

- To strengthen the belief in Hashem. “Therefore He commanded us to abandon everything that the land will produce this year, in addition to the downtime from working, so one will remember that the land which gives to him its produce every year, not on its own prowess, as there is a Master over the land and its masters, and when He wishes, He commands to abandon them.”
- To strengthen the trait of charity by giving up one’s property with no compensation. “Also, there is a benefit of acquiring the trait of charity, as there is no greater benefactor than one who gives without a hope for a reward.”
- To strengthen confidence in Hashem. “Additionally, there is a different benefit that the person will add confidence in Hashem, as anyone who finds it in his heart to give and abandon all the growth of his forefathers’ lands for a whole year, and he and his family do that throughout their life, the traits of stinginess and lack of faith will not be part of them.”

In the sefer Kli Yakar by Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Luntschitz on Parshas Behar, he gives another tremendous reason for this mitzvah:

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To infuse the Jewish people with faith and trust in Hashem. Hashem was worried that, perhaps, once the Jewish people entered Eretz Yisroel and started working the land in a natural way that they would eventually lose their faith and think that all they obtained was due to their hard work, rather than a gift from Hashem. Therefore, Hashem ordered them to plow and sow seeds every year, though the natural way is to plant for two years in a row and leave the land fallow on the third year (so as not to weaken the land). Moreover, during the sixth year, not only will the land NOT be less fertile, the fruit of the land will be so abundant, that it will be enough for the next three years. Through these miracles the Jewish people see that the land belongs to Hashem and they will have faith only in Him.

Although this mitzvah is given to those who reside in Eretz Yisroel, everyone can learn from this mitzvah about the importance of faith in Hashem and not to rely on their own power and wealth, which is the way of the nations of the world. The Jewish people view themselves as custodians of wealth in this world, but their true mission is to prepare themselves for eternal life in the World to Come.

In the sefer Giborei Koach, Rabbi Yitzchok Napcha brings a medrash on the pasuk in Psalm 103: “The powerful who do his bidding...” This pasuk refers to those who keep the seventh year (shmitta). Rabbi Napcha explains that the reason why they were called powerful is due to the emunah they display by remaining silent when they see their fallow fields, with their gates open and the crops freely consumed by others.

Tosafos in tractate Sukkah (39:1) teach us that there are countless laws and prohibitions regarding the year of shmitta; we will look at a small portion of those laws on a more general level. **The laws of shmitta can be broken down into two general groups:**

1. Laws regarding the land – these laws affect land in Eretz Yisroel and the crops grown there.
2. Laws regarding money – these laws are applicable everywhere and are laws that apply to all Jews, rather than those in a specific location.

## SOURCES FOR LAWS REGARDING LAND IN THE TORAH:

- Parshas Mishpatim: "But in the seventh [year] you shall release it and abandon it; the poor of your people shall eat [it], and what they leave over, the beasts of the field shall eat. So shall you do to your vineyard [and] to your olive tree[s]."<sup>1</sup>
- Parshas Ki Sisa: "Six days you may work, and on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing and in harvest you shall rest."<sup>2</sup>
- Parshas Behar: "And Hashem spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, Speak to the children of Israel and you shall say to them: When you come to the land that I am giving you, the land shall rest a Sabbath to Hashem. You may sow your field for six years, and for six years you may prune your vineyard, and gather in its produce, But in the seventh year, the land shall have a complete rest a Sabbath to Hashem; you shall not sow your field, nor shall you prune your vineyard. You shall not reap the after growth of your harvest, and you shall not pick the grapes you had set aside [for yourself], [for] it shall be a year of rest for the land. And [the produce of] the Sabbath of the land shall be yours to eat for you, for your male and female slaves, and for your hired worker and resident who live with you."<sup>3</sup>

## SOURCES FOR LAWS REGARDING MONEY IN THE TORAH:

Parshas Re'eh: "At the end of seven years you will make a release. And this is the manner of the release; to release the hand of every creditor from what he lent his friend; he shall not exact from his friend or his brother, because time of the release for Hashem has arrived."<sup>4</sup>

"Beware, lest there be in your heart an unfaithful thought, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release has approached,' and you will begrudge your needy brother and not give him, and he will cry out to Hashem against you, and it will be a sin to you."<sup>5</sup>

1 Shemos 23:11.

2 ע"פ הרמב"ם שמו"א י"א 12:43 somehS

3 Vayikra 25:1-6.

4 Devarim 15:1-2.

5 Devarim 15:9.

**The halachos pertaining to the land in Eretz Yisroel are further split into two types – positive and negative commandments.**

### POSITIVE:

1. To abandon everything which grows from the land.
2. To stop working the land.
3. To consume the fruits of the seventh year.<sup>1</sup>

### NEGATIVE:

1. Not to work the land.
2. Not to work the trees.
3. Not to harvest what grows during the seventh year.
4. Not to harvest the fruits of the trees in the same manner as they are collected every year.

While we are living in Gulus there are various opinions about the origin of the mitzvah of shmitta. Some say that it is still a mitzvah d'oraisa, others hold that it is a mitzvah d'rabbonon, and some say that it is not an obligation at all, but is still good to observe. The majority of halachic authorities rule that now it is a mitzvah d'rabbonon.

### GENERAL RULES OF SHMITTA

All labor performed on the land and trees for the purpose of growth is forbidden. Some of the prohibitions are from the Torah and some are d'rabbonon. Sowing, trimming, reaping and harvesting are explicitly mentioned in the Torah. Some also says that plowing and planting are forbidden d'oraisa. Our Sages prohibited similar actions, including irrigation, fertilizing, and clearing the land from stones, as these actions enable the trees and plants to grow better. Labor that is intended to preserve the health of trees is not forbidden, but a rabbi should be consulted for the correct methods.

**There are seven specific types of actions that are affected by hilchos shmitta.**

1. Working the land, including all work that pertains to growing.

1 ע"פ המגילת אסתר ועוד בדעת הרמב"ן ויש חולקים דאין זו דעת הרמב"ן

2. Abandoning the harvest. All crops must be left in the fields, except what will be consumed by the owner in a short amount of time.
3. Uncultivated crops. All crops that grow wild, without tending, are forbidden to harvest. This does not include fruits that grow on trees.
4. Disposal/Waste. One may not discard or waste shmitta crops. There are specific ways to handle spoiled or unused parts of the crop.
5. Sales. One may not sell or trade shmitta crops.
6. Storage. Crops can only be consumed during the season that it is found in the fields. Any crops left over after the season ends cannot be possessed. There are various opinions on whether this is a Halacha from the Torah or d'rabbonon and how to deal with the leftover crops.
7. Loan forgiveness. All unpaid loans are nullified unless the lender completed a *pruzbul* (Halachic document discussed later in this article which exempts the loan from shmitta).

### TAKING CROPS OUT OF ERETZ YISROEL

Though there are those who rely on Otzar Beis Din<sup>2</sup> to sell shmitta crops, the Ⓢ does not give kosher certification to products done under Otzar Beis Din. One of the stipulations of shmitta is that crops cannot be taken out of Eretz Yisroel and most of the products in Israel that are certified by the Ⓢ are exported, so Otzar Beis Din is not a viable option.

### KEDUSHAS SHVI'IS (THE HOLINESS OF THE SEVENTH YEAR)

All crops that are grown in the halachic borders of Eretz Yisroel

2. The Beis Din takes ownership of the crops and facilitates the sale at a price that covers basic expenses of harvesting and labor. See K kosher Spirit Tishrei 5782 for further explanation.



and are owned by a Jewish person have the holiness of the seventh year.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, produce grown from the ground that is collected after the beginning of the seventh year is holy. Legumes and seeds have kedushas shvi'is once they have reached 1/3rd of maturity and tree fruits have kedushas shvi'is after the pollination of the flower, before the fruit grows.

It is important to note that money paid for the crops with kedushas shvi'is is holy as well. One is only allowed to use the money earned through kedushas shvi'is to buy food, which imbues the food with holiness and returns the money to a mundane status. Paying with credit (credit card or other form of credit) does not create kedushah on the earnings.

#### How can one use crops with kedushas shvi'is?

1. May be consumed in a conventional way.
2. May be applied externally (like lubrication). This can only be done with fruits that are usually grown for this purpose. Today it is quite uncommon, so there is a halachic discussion about whether or not it is allowed.
3. May be used for Shabbos and Yom Tov candles.
4. One may not use them to wash clothes and/or remove stains.
5. One may not use them as medicine.
6. One may not ruin the item (ex: using it to extinguish a fire – like wine for Havdalah).
7. One may not throw them away in a conventional garbage.
8. One may not eat it in an unconventional way (ex: to cook something that is usually consumed raw).

#### SHMITTA AND MONEY

The reason behind the mitzvah of financial shmitta is, as the Sefer HaChinuch writes (mitzvah 477), “to teach ourselves the good trait of generosity and to increase our faith in Hashem.”

#### The commandment is split into three parts:

1. To cancel the debts of our fellow Jews.
2. Not to ask for repayment after the seventh year.
3. Not to refrain from lending money (out of fear of not being repaid before shmitta).

The opinion of the majority of the Rishonim is that this shmitta kesef (money) in our days is only d'rabbonon in order to prevent the halachos from being forgotten. According to most opinions, loans are cancelled at the end of the shmitta year, although there are some Rishonim that maintain the loans are cancelled at the start of the shmitta year. To satisfy both opinions, a pruzbul is executed at the start and end of the seventh year.

#### There are some instances when the debt is not subject to forgiveness during shmitta.

1. If the debt was given to the court.
2. Debts which are backed by collateral (pawn).
3. A debt that does not have a specific time for repayment.
4. Money that is indebted for tzedakah purposes.

Though one is not obligated, it is praiseworthy to repay one's debt after the seventh year, even if it was cancelled due to shmitta. In such a case, the lender must first decline the repayment by saying that he abandoned the debt. Then, the borrower has to insist on giving it to him as a gift.

#### PRUZBUL

The pruzbul was instituted after Hillel noticed that people stopped lending money as shmitta approached. Pruzbul is a combination of three words פרוז בולי בוטי, which mean a regulation for the rich and poor. A pruzbul turns the loan over to the court so that it will not be nullified by shmitta.

A pruzbul is only a technical solution to a debt that already exists. It cannot be applied to debts incurred after the initial pruzbul is executed. There is a halachic disagreement about

whether a proper Beis Din is needed to execute the pruzbul or whether any three Jewish men will suffice.

I will conclude with a story which shows the greatness of this mitzvah.

This story took place during the last shmitta year. There were many heroes who withstood temptation and displayed extraordinary emunah by observing shmitta fully and not relying on heterim.

In order to praise Hashem and give chizuk to these heroes, there were big signs at every farm bearing the words: “Here shmitta is observed.”

One day I did a kashrus inspection in a city with a mixed population of Jews and Gentiles. A nice car parked near me and a Gentile got out of the car and asked to speak with me privately. Since I did not know him, I suggested instead that we should speak here, in a public place. At first, he was reluctant but then he started speaking. He didn't introduce himself, but I was able to gather that he was a member of one of the known mafias. When he recognized me as a rabbi, he turned to me and said in an imposing tone: “Look, we usually protect the farmers from thieves (with the farmer's paying protection money) and lately a group of rabbis started a large security company and took over the entire market. They are everywhere; their signs are everywhere. This isn't nice; they should let others do business as well.”

I never heard of such a company, so I asked him the name of the company. He replied, “The company is called ‘Shmitta’”

I kept my smile to myself and answered him that I'd never heard of it. He left and I understood that many Jewish people were saved due to the merit of keeping shmitta.

May we merit the coming of Moshiach very soon and when the land will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem. ☺

3. There are differing opinions on whether crops owned by a Gentile has kedushas shvi'is.

# FLAVOR PRODUCTION

BY RABBI DON YOEL LEVY OB"Y

Food production has advanced by leaps and bounds over the past century. Commercial production is much more than mixing basic ingredients together to create a product. Just like food coloring is added to many products to add or enhance the color, today most commercial food products rely on manufactured flavors, both “natural” and “artificial” to make the product taste great. Whether the flavor is completely synthetic, or has natural components, the production is a complex process.

On a recent trip to Europe I visited a flavor factory to see if it met our kosher standards. Flavor producers are one of the more versatile types of producers in the food industry. A standard factory will usually focus on one type of production; for example, a bakery will usually have baking equipment, a candy factory will have candy producing equipment, a chocolate producer will have chocolate equipment, etc. On the other hand, a flavor facility can have multi-faceted types of production areas requiring different expertise. Flavor companies also have thousands of ingredients and can produce tens of thousands of different formulae.

## TYPES OF PRODUCTION

Flavors are produced in a variety of different ways. There is cold production and hot produc-

tion. Cold and hot production is further divided between liquid production and dry production. To add to the complexity, a typical flavor house usually utilizes multiple different types of production in the same facility!

## COLD LIQUID PRODUCTION:

In a liquid production, the mashgiach is focused on making sure both the ingredients and equipment are kosher. If a non-kosher production is done before the kosher production and the method is only cold production, all that is needed is a thorough cleaning to make sure that the equipment is not contaminated with actual non-kosher ingredients.

If the non-kosher or dairy ingredients used were cold, but held in the equipment for 24 hours or more, then according to Halacha the ingredient is considered absorbed into the equipment and the equipment must be koshered in the event that the kosher product will remain in the equipment for 24 hours, or will be produced with heat. This is because the equipment will have absorbed the non-kosher or dairy taste and the machinery will contaminate the kosher product.

In the case of a very strong, sharp tasting non-kosher ingredient (for example, a wine-based, strong non-kosher alcohol) the ingredient can be considered absorbed in a much shorter period of

time and would also need koshering.

Without going into great detail, koshering would generally consist of cleaning the equipment, having it sit idle for 24 hours, and then filling it with water and bringing that water to a rolling boil, following with a cold rinse.

In a flavor house, they are constantly producing different flavors with different ingredients so the mashgiach checking the kashrus of this equipment has to have access to what is being produced on this equipment in order to be able to know when non-kosher products have been in the equipment for over 24 hours. This means that he must have access to the company's records, which usually means computer records in today's high-tech world.

If the mashgiach doesn't have access, then he will have to kasher the equipment before producing any products that will remain on the equipment for more than 24 hours (even if it's a cold process) or any production involving heat.

### COLD DRY BLENDING

Another facet of cold production is dry blending. This involves powders that are mixed together in blenders. The kosher concerns in dry blending are that the previous product could be non-kosher, or could be dairy. If non-kosher was produced first and then one wants to produce kosher, then of course the equipment must be thoroughly cleaned and cleaning powder out of all the pipes and crevices can be quite challenging. In addition, if one wants to produce pareve, then one must ensure that the equipment has been thoroughly cleaned from the dairy product prior to use.

Here again, we must have access to the company's records in order to know the sequence of production. This will usually require the

mashgiach to be computer savvy, so that he will be thoroughly familiar with the company's records and data management system.

This is only a short synopsis of the cold production to give you some insight into what is required of the mashgiach in the cold department of the flavor company.

### HOT PRODUCTION:

According to Halacha, if non-kosher is produced hot on the equipment, the equipment is considered non-kosher. Anything [hot or with a long production time] subsequently produced on this heated equipment is considered non-kosher. Even if all the ingredients are kosher, if dairy is produced via hot methods, the piece of equipment now obtains a dairy status and anything [hot or with a long production time] produced on this equipment is considered dairy. In "hot" equipment we have many different types of equipment presenting us with different challenges. Whereas originally "cooking" involved only simple pots or ovens, today we have many different ways of producing "hot" products.

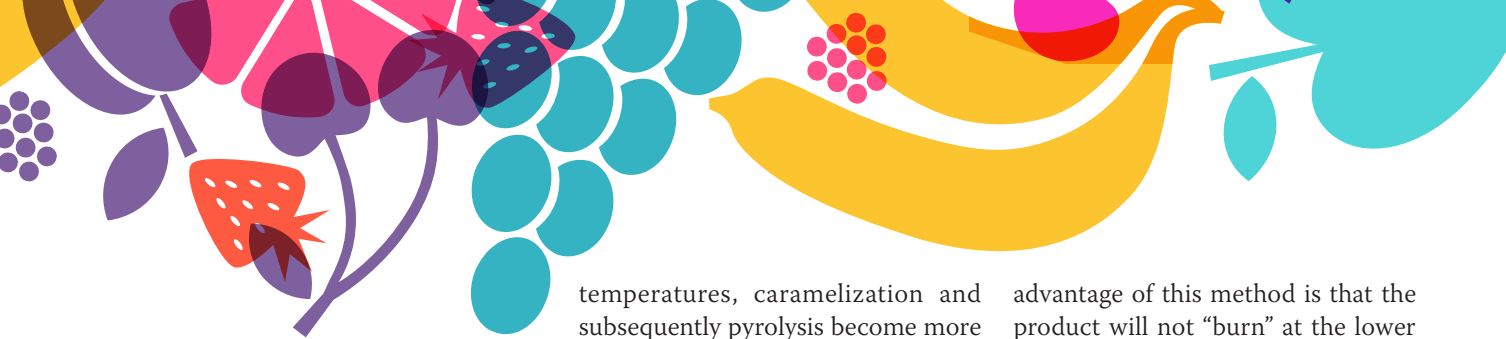
We still have the standard way of cooking items in a pot. However, whereas our ancestors put a pot on a fire and cooked, today the fire is not usually in the production area. The fire is in a huge boiler that produces steam that is piped to an enclosed jacket surrounding the pot and this steam heats up the pot.

Kosherizing this pot is usually quite easy with a thorough cleaning, down time of 24 hours and then filling to the top and bringing to a rolling boil. However, according to Halacha, when two liquids share a common (metal) wall they are considered connected. Therefore the steam that was heating the non-kosher product becomes non-kosher and

## REMEMBERING RABBI DON YOEL LEVY OB" M

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must be addressed before we can even think of koshering. The halachos and procedures involving non-kosher steam is an entire article unto itself and cannot be further addressed here.

Other types of heating equipment include pasteurizers, heat exchangers or similar types of equipment. These are closed systems that heat the products, which does not allow us to actually see the water boiling during koshering. The solution here is to know the altitude at the facility and at what temperature water boils at this altitude (the higher the altitude, the lower the temperature required to reach boiling). For example, at sea level water will boil at 212° Fahrenheit or 100° Celsius. In Denver, Colorado, the mile high city, water will boil at 203° Fahrenheit or 95° Celsius. Then the mashgiach checks the temperature to ensure it reaches that boiling point via a thermometer, which is usually built in to the piece of equipment.

## MAILLARD REACTION PRODUCTION

Another type of flavor production is what we call Maillard reaction production. To quote from Wikipedia:

The Maillard reaction (/maɪˈjɑr/my-yar; French pronunciation: [majab]) is a chemical reaction between amino acids and reducing sugars that gives browned food their desirable flavor. For example, seared steaks, pan-fried dumplings, cookies, breads, toasted marshmallows, and many other foods undergo this reaction. It is named after French chemist Louis-Camille Maillard, who first described it in 1912 while attempting to reproduce biological protein synthesis.

The reaction is a form of non-enzymatic browning which typically proceeds rapidly from around 140 to 165 °C (284 to 329 °F). At higher

temperatures, caramelization and subsequently pyrolysis become more pronounced. The reactive carbonyl group of the sugar reacts with the nucleophilic amino group of the amino acid, and forms a complex mixture of poorly characterized molecules responsible for a range of odors and flavors. This process is accelerated in an alkaline environment (e.g., lye applied to darken pretzels), as the amino groups (RNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup>) are deprotonated and, hence, have an increased nucleophilicity. The type of the amino acid determines the resulting flavor. This reaction is the basis of the flavoring industry.

Koshering from a Maillard reaction also requires bringing water in the equipment to a rolling boil, as described above.

## THE DRYING METHOD


Another more complicated type of production used in flavors and in other types of production is the drying of liquids until they turn into powder form. This is usually done by what is commonly known as a spray dryer tower, which is a huge inverted cone that has the product coming in from the top through an atomizer in either hot or cold form. The liquid spray is confronted by a blast of super-heated hot air and falls to the bottom in a powder form. This piece of equipment is quite complicated to kasher if first used for non-kosher ingredients (or dairy ingredients when pareve is needed) and the methods cannot be discussed within the limits of this article.




Another type of dryer is what we call a vacuum dryer, which creates a vacuum to decrease the air pressure and force the water to evaporate at a lower temperature (similar to water boiling at a lower temperature at higher altitude where there is less air, as described above). This can be done in one stage or several stages. The

advantage of this method is that the product will not “burn” at the lower temperature and its taste will not change due to the drying process. A product dried through the vacuum method can be done without any heat, eliminating the need for koshering. However, where heat is used, the equipment must be koshered through boiling, as previously mentioned.

## CONCLUSION

The above methods are just a brief glance at the complex production methods and equipment used at a flavor facility. These concerns are in addition to the many thousands of ingredients that are used in a flavor house. The ingredients alone require special monitoring using an advanced computer system.

The  also has a full time staff in our main office monitoring the tens of thousands of products that these companies produce. First and foremost, these employees determine, via a complex data system AND rabbinic review, whether the formula is kosher. If it is a kosher formula, then the product is classified as pareve or dairy and a rabbi determines whether the production equipment requires koshering before production of this particular product.

The  has many flavor houses where we have full time mashgichim monitoring the systems there, in addition to the full time employees in our office. We have special systems set up to monitor the receiving of all ingredients (in all certified companies) to ensure that only acceptable ingredients make it into the approved areas in the companies, as well as many checks and balances and individual procedures tailored to the unique realities in each facility. This multi-faceted and custom designed approach makes every product certified by  Kosher Certification “kosher without compromise”. 

# SAVTA SOL'S SFINJ

(MOROCCAN  
DOUGHNUTS)

BY SINA MIZRAHI

Sfinj is an airy Moroccan doughnut that's served plain, sprinkled with sugar or soaked in honey. The leavened dough is shaped into rings and deep fried until golden and crispy with a fluffy interior.

My Savta would make sfinj for every milestone, every celebration, or for no particular reason. It was a happy food, filled with love. There wasn't a time I visited her in Israel and wasn't greeted by her smile and sfinj; honey-lacquered and just-sweet. This isn't her recipe per se; she works the dough by feel, but I'd say it's close. Every time I make them, I feel instantly connected to her from afar.

## MAKES 12 DOUGHNUTS

1 Tbsp instant dry yeast  
1 Tbsp sugar  
2 cups warm water  
4 cups (500 g) all-purpose flour  
1 tsp sea salt  
oil, for frying  
½ cup granulated sugar, for coating  
honey, for serving

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk yeast, sugar, and water until combined. Let stand until foamy and active, 5 minutes. Add flour and salt; using the dough hook, knead on medium speed until a raggedy dough forms. Cover; rest the dough for 15 minutes.
2. Turn the mixer to medium speed; knead for 5 minutes. Increase speed to medium-high for another 2 minutes. Cover; proof in a warm spot for 1 to 1½ hours, or until doubled in size.
3. The dough is very, very (frustratingly) sticky, but power through because you will get the fluffiest sfinj. Prepare a small bowl of oil and dip in your hands to coat generously. Deflate and scrape the dough from the sides of the bowl, fold over from the bottom to shape into a loose ball. With your thumb and forefinger, pinch off a piece of dough and shape into a 3-inch ball (roughly 85 g); place on a greased tray. It will spread considerably. Repeat with remaining dough, dipping your hands in oil as needed. Pour granulated sugar into a shallow bowl.
4. Fill a medium pot with at least 1½ inches of oil. Heat over medium heat until oil reaches 350°F or bubbles appear when inserting a wooden utensil. Dip your hands in oil and hold

a dough ball between your thumb and index finger. Punch through the center to create a hole, then rotate and stretch the dough to make a wide ring. Gently drop into the hot oil and watch it puff and turn golden, 2–3 minutes per side. Transfer to a paper towel-lined tray to cool slightly. Repeat the process with remaining dough, frying as many as comfortably fit in the pot. Dredge in sugar while still warm and/or drizzle with honey and serve with mint tea.

## NOTE

*Sfinj is best eaten fresh. Adding an egg yolk will make the dough stay moist longer, for a day, maybe two. To freeze, cool completely, omit the sugar topping, and wrap each sfinj in a few layers of plastic wrap. Put into a freezer bag and freeze for up to 3 months. Bring to room temperature or warm in the oven until heated through.*

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*Good Food is a collection of (mostly) Middle Eastern recipes that are inspired by Sina Mizrahi's cultural backgrounds and the places she has lived. You can find the cookbook on [artscroll.com](http://artscroll.com), Amazon, or your local Judaica store.*




# LAYER BY LAYER:



## BEHIND THE SCENES OF CABBAGE INSPECTION

### *Part I*

BY RABBI BENZION  
CHANOWITZ



Recently  Kosher posted pictures of me inspecting a few cabbage fields on their Instagram account. I would like to take this opportunity to explain what I was doing there.

As a field representative my role is to verify that  policies and procedures are being followed at the facilities I visit. My job in the field is to follow the standards that the  Kosher rabbonim provide in order to assure that the food is “kosher without compromise”. This is why I feel that it is important for you, the consumer, to be privy to a behind the scenes look at cabbage inspections.

### INTRODUCTION

Fruit and vegetables are inherently kosher, with three exceptions:

- 1) Israeli produce requires tithing of terumos and ma'asros before it may be used.
- 2) Israeli produce cannot be harvested or exported during a shmitta year.
- 3) We are prohibited from eating the new fruit of a tree (orlah) for the first three or four years.

Recently, we have been presented with a new problem: insects. While insects are not part of the fruit and vegetables, they often adhere to them, and are difficult to find and remove. This issue has been discussed at length in the Shulchan Oruch (Code of Jewish Law), but has come to the forefront due to changes in pesticide use over the past few decades. Commercial pesticides were developed in the late 19th century and by the mid-20th century the use of strong pesticides, like DDT, was widespread.

During those years there was less risk of infestation and the issue was not a common one.

After nearly a century of pesticide use, scientists discovered that the pesticide runoff contaminated the local water supply and public opinion turned to minimizing the use of pesticides as much as possible. Furthermore, some consumers started insisting on buying only organic, pesticide-free produce.

Currently, USDA regulations allow produce with minimal amounts of insects to be classified as fit for human consumption. While this may or may not be healthy for humans, it is surely not acceptable from a kashrus standpoint.

## HALACHIC GUIDELINES

The generally accepted Halachic guidelines differentiate between:

a) "*Miyut She-Ainoi Motzoi*" when the (overwhelming) majority of this species of produce is insect free. It is rare (less than 10%) to find insects on this fruit or vegetable.

b) "*Miyut Hamotzoi*" when a majority (over 50%) of this type of produce does not have infestation, yet it is somewhat common to find insects (in over 10% of this produce).

c) "*Rov*" when insects may be found in a majority of this type of fruit or vegetable.

This article is not the place to discuss all of the Halachic ramifications; there has been much written on this subject and this is merely a brief review.

Another important note is that the prohibition of eating insects is mentioned in the Torah numerous times. Depending on the type of insect, there can possibly be six Torah prohibitions for eating them. In addition, the halachic principal of *bittul* cannot be applied to insects.<sup>1</sup> Even the smallest insect is a "*beryah*" a complete creature which cannot be nullified.

## WHAT SIZE INSECT?

*Lo nitna Torah l'malachei hashareis* – The Torah was given to human beings, not to angels. Consequently, when the Torah prohibits eating insects, it means the insects that we can see with a naked eye. So, how do we apply this practically?

The Halacha refers to people who have reasonably healthy eyesight. Today, about 75% of people

use corrective lenses, and even then, many do not achieve 20/20 vision.

Part of the difficulty of spotting insects is because they blend in to their host. Hashem created insects with colors that match their habitats, which serves as protection from predators. Consequently, it may take some training in order to be able to spot insects on produce. Trained mashgichim are able to spot insects much more readily than the average person checking produce at home. In addition, mashgichim are aided by light boxes and magnifying equipment, which helps simplify inspections.



For those who cannot see well, either with or without glasses, there are specialized procedures and magnifying devices that make washing produce and inspection for insects easier. In our next installment, I will endeavor to describe the actual procedures for the cabbage fields and the type of insects that can be found there. (K)

<sup>1</sup> See Kosher Spirit Pesach 5778 for a more in-depth discussion.

**IS VEGETABLE**

**ALWAYS  
KOSHER?**



**It's a common misconception that vegetable oil is inherently kosher and does not require reliable kosher supervision. In fact, the oil production industry is a complicated one, touching upon multiple halachic issues.**

## HALACHIC FOUNDATIONS

### *Nosein Ta'am Lifgam*

Non-kosher items that were mixed into kosher food and affect the taste of a mixture in a negative way are called "*nosein ta'am lifgam*". This does not render the kosher food forbidden.

When non-kosher utensils are used for hot food preparation, these vessels (metal, wood, or stone) should be properly cleaned and then kashered due to the absorption of non-kosher food. Even if it has been more than 24 hours since they were used to cook non-kosher food (after which the vessels become *nosein ta'am lifgam*), our Sages forbade cooking with these utensils because they might be confused with vessels which aren't *nosein ta'am lifgam*.

### *Safeik S'feka (Double Doubt)*

After the fact, if one cooked with a non-kosher vessel, even those used in a heated process, the food is permissible because we assume that those vessels were not used within the past 24 hours. It is permissible because it is considered to be a double doubt; there is doubt whether the Gentile used this vessel within the last 24 hours, in which case all the taste that it has absorbed is considered foul and not a kosher issue. Even if it had been used today, there is still a possibility that the Gentile used it for an item that might negatively affect the taste of the dish in question. For example: if the food in question is oil, if the Gentile previously

cooked meat in that vessel, the taste of meat would negatively impact the taste of the oil.

From the outset, it is forbidden to cook with the vessels of a non-Jew by relying on the doubts, as mentioned above. If it is likely that a Gentile used these vessels within the last 24 hours, such as restaurant utensils that are constantly used (such as a fryer which is often used with animal fats), or an oil refinery that operates year-round, one cannot rely on any of the above-mentioned leniencies, even after the fact. If one does know that the vessel has not been used in the last 24 hours, but he also *knows* that the ingredients cooked in the vessels would not negatively impact the food in question, one of the doubts falls away and the food is forbidden.

## HOW IS OIL REFINED?

The most common vegetable oils marketed to consumers are sunflower, canola, rapeseed, and soy oils. Industrial vegetable oils include the aforementioned consumer oils, as well as palm, palm kernel, and coconut oils. Industrial oils often originate in the Far East.

In addition to the unrefined vegetable oils, animal fats, such as fish and tallow, are processed in some refineries. The refining process addresses several components of the oil, including triglycerides, phosphates (gums), free fatty acids (FFA), and wax, and enhancing the appearance and the smell. Several ingredients are

used to achieve the desired refined oil. Some of these are antioxidants, beta carotene, rosemary extract, and anti-foam, in addition to the chemical auxiliary materials.

There are several steps during the refining process:

**Pressing** – The seeds are pressed with a mechanic pressor and then go through a second extraction with hexane. Then the oil is filtered to separate the waste and the hexane in a distillation process (steam which passes through the oil).

**Degumming** - Extracts the phosphates (gums) and lecithin. This process can be done in two ways:

**Centrifugation with hot water** – This separates the water from the oil and the phosphates are separated with the water because they dissolve in water.

**Mix with phosphoric acid and citric acid** – This is especially useful when the phosphates contain magnesium or calcium, which are difficult to remove with water alone.

**Removing the fatty acids** – The main components of the oil are triglycerides. All triglycerides are essentially a compound of glycerin and three fatty acids. As time passes, the oil naturally oxidizes, causing a separation between the acids and glycerin, and there are more other free fatty acids present in the oil. These FFA must be removed because it affects the taste of the oil and there are two ways to do this:

**Chemical neutralization and centrifugation** – This is done by mixing caustic soda with water. The FFA are dissolved in the water and then separated by centrifugation between the water and the oil.

**Physically** - by a **deodorization** facility. This is achieved by injecting steam into the oil under a vacuum (stripping) and the FFA evaporates out.

**Bleaching** - to improve the look and lighten the color. This is achieved by adding activated carbon and bleaching earth.

**Winterization** – extracting the wax by cooling, which causes the wax to crystallize, and then it is separated.

**Fractionation** (done in palm and palm kernel oil) - The oil undergoes a slow cooling process which causes the olein to separate and sink while the stearin remains at the top.

**Hardening** (for hardened oil production) – This is done with a nickel catalyst that has an oil coating. This ingredient needs to be kosher certified.

## KOSHER CERTIFICATION AT AN OIL REFINERY

When setting up kosher supervision at an oil refinery, it is important that the refinery only processes vegetable oils. The heating system should not be shared with other factories in the area. If it is a shared system, the rabbi needs to find out what is produced in those factories, especially when the steam comes in direct contact with the oil. If the refinery supplements its production with refined oil purchased from other refineries, the oil must be kosher. Sometimes a company outsources part of the production (due to either technical or logistical rea-

# IT IS IMPORTANT ONLY PROCESSES

sons). That refinery might be also producing non-kosher, so it is important to verify what happens in the co-manufacturer's facility.

Some factories produce both kosher and non-kosher oils. Before certifying any facility, a formal binding contract that outlines the kosher requirements and obligations must be executed. This is in addition to appointing a mashgiach



# THAT THE REFINERY VEGETABLE OILS

who understands the system well and is available for frequent inspections.

One should make sure that the kosher and non-kosher production lines are completely separated and physically divided. In addition, the steam system must be either separated, drained (not recycled), or *pogum* (bitter).

There is also the potential for issues in the way the oil is heated. To save energy, the incoming oil is often heated by the outgoing oil through a heat exchanger. The cooling water is often shared, as well.

If there is an identical kosher and a non-kosher product (such as glycerin), there has to be constant supervision (*mashgiach temidi*) for both production and transportation. This is necessary even if the systems are completely separate, for example, if one is done via ion exchange and one by distillation.

## MONITORING TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE

When transporting oil one has to make sure, as explained above, that the tankers and other reusable equipment were not used within the last 24 hours, because the previous cargo can be a potential kashrus problem according to the Torah if it is not *pogum* or if the kosher oil is not 60 times the volume of the non-kosher residue (which nullifies the non-kosher oil).

Based on the above considerations there is still a *safeik d'oraisa*, so measures must be taken to ensure that:

1. The vessels used for hauling the oil are either new or kosher for transporting the oil from its source to the refineries. This includes the large and small barges, including all of the storage cells. Kosher and non-kosher should not be transported at the same time, because the heating system can adversely affect the status of the kosher products.
2. The storage tanks located at the terminals in the ports, including the steam heating system, must be kosher.
3. The tanks used to transport the finished product from the refinery to the customers must also be new or kosher.

All of this requires special monitoring and complex data review to make sure all the equipment used is kosher by verifying that the last loads were acceptable and the storage vessels were thoroughly cleaned and koshered.

Ⓢ Kosher, under the leadership of Rabbi Berel Levy OB" M, was the first agency to set up this system for all kosher supervised oils. Rabbi Don Yoel Levy OB" M, who succeeded his father as the Kashrus Administrator of the Ⓢ, gave his body and soul to fortify kashrus around the world, especially for bulk oils. He was at the head of the campaign consistently and resolutely, until even in Europe, many tank cleaning stations include a cleaning and a kosherizing program which all hechsherim accept. Today the Vaad HaKashrus continues to uphold these high standards for all Ⓢ-certified bulk oils.

In 5767 (2007-2008), there were B'nei Torah in Lakewood who pointed out deficiencies in the kosher statuses of unmonitored transport ships, as mentioned in this article, and they turned to Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv ztz"l, who wrote a letter urging American rabbis to take care of this issue. As a result, Rav Dovid Feinstein ztz"l, called for a meeting of all of the Roshei Yeshivos and heads of kashrus agencies in the United States which took place at Yeshiva Tiferes Yerushalayim. I was privileged to attend this great assembly with my dear uncle, Rabbi Don Yoel Levy OB" M.

One of the Roshei Yeshivos suggested that there should be special productions of oil done at a high level of kosher supervision for B'nei Torah. It seemed to him that the general oil productions were too vast to be sufficiently monitored. I responded: "There are hundreds of kosher products containing oil that are sold in grocery stores; how can we make sure they are all up to our standard?"

When I was asked about the situation in Europe I explained, with G-d's grace, clearly and at length the entire process and system used by Ⓢ Kosher. The rabbis and Roshei Yeshivos accepted our systems with great admiration and called upon all of the hechsherim to follow our example.

As one can see from the intricate process described in this article, there is certainly a major difference between a bottle of oil that is certified by an agency that monitors the entire refining process, from the source extraction through the bottling, and one that is not strictly monitored. Therefore, one should only purchase oil bearing a reliable kosher supervision.

*This article is l'ilui nishmas my late wife, Bluma Chana bas Rav Chaim Aharon A" H, who passed away at a young age. She was always by my side, especially in my kashrus work and enabled me to teach, learn and serve Hashem according to His will. ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.*

# Breakfast Cereal



Rabbi Sholom Ber Hendel, © Executive Kashrus Vaad

## WHAT IS CEREAL?

Cold breakfast cereals were invented over 100 years ago to replace the warm cereals that were typically used for breakfast until then. Cold cereals provide the convenience of ready to eat food that requires very little preparation, and are typically used with milk or a milk substitute, or as a snack.

Despite the decline in cereal consumption in recent years due to the rising trend of “on the go” foods people are still eating cereals and cereal companies have developed many different varieties and flavors. It is estimated that there are over 5,000 types of cereal available online and in supermarkets today.

## HOW IS CEREAL MADE?

The production process is specific to each type of cereal. The general process is described below but it is important to note that it is slightly different for each product.

**EXTRUDED CEREALS** – Extrusion is a process of pushing mixed ingredients out through die (small opening in the desired shape). Grain flour is mixed with water and other ingredients, then cooked and extruded (a filling such as chocolate can be extruded into the cereal). The product is then dried in the oven.

**FLAKES** – The grain is cooked, dried and then flaked between two flaking rolls. Flakes can also be made by cooking grain flour and extruding it into a pellet, and then flaking it between the flaking rolls.

**SHREDDED CEREAL** – Cooked grains are shredded into the desired shape and then dried in the oven.

**PUFFED GRAINS** – Whole grain or extruded pellets are left in a pressurized & steamed vessel. The pressure is suddenly released, causing the steam to flash off and the grain to puff. The grains are then dried.

All cereals can be coated with sweeteners and vitamins and then dried again.

At the end of the process the cereal can be packed as is or mixed with other types of cereals and/or additives such as dried fruits.

## IS CEREAL KOSHER?

The long ingredient lists found on cereals boxes are full of kashrus sensitive ingredients. In addition, the equipment can pose a kashrus concern as well – as mentioned above cereal manufacturing often does not have fixed lines, and equipment can be used for different types of products. Any dairy or non-kosher ingredient can compromise the kashrus status of the products produced on the same equipment.

The vitamins that are sprayed on the cereal to add to the nutritional value are produced synthetically and need to be kosher certified. Sefardim should not use kitniyos based cereals during Pesach without a reliable kitniyos kosher certification even if they know that the equipment is dedicated to kitniyos based cereals because the vitamins have chometz concerns.

Non-kosher ingredient inclusions such as marshmallows that are added at the final blending do not pose a kashrus concern to the kashrus status of the equipment because the process is cold and the equipment is thoroughly cleaned afterwards.

## ARE CEREALS CONSIDERED PAS OR TAVSHIL?

Only products made from the five grains (wheat, barley, oat, spelt and rye) could potentially be considered pas. This rules out any cereals made from other grains such as corn and rice. Even with the cereals made from the five grains, they are not considered pas because they

do not have *tzuras hapas* - they are not shaped like bread.

Any product which is not considered pas is considered a *tavshil* and subject to the Bishul Yisroel requirements. However, breakfast cereals are not served at official meals, so the final product is not considered *oleh al shulchan melachim* (fit for a king's table) and is not subject to the Bishul Yisroel requirements. In addition, cereals are not considered important by themselves without the milk.

## WHAT IS THE BROCHA?

- When any of the five grains are ground into flour and processed or crushed and cooked, the brocha is *mezonos*. If the whole grain is roasted or baked and still visible, the correct brocha is *ha'adamah*.
- Flakes made from actual grains such as corn are considered *ha'adamah*, but if the flakes are made from corn flour the brocha is *shehakol*.
- The brocha on Crispy Rice and cereals made from rice flour is *shehakol* for those who follow Shulchan Oruch HaRav (but it is best to eat them as part of a *hamotzi* meal<sup>1</sup>) and *mezonos* for those who follow the Mishnah Berurah.
- When the five grains are mixed with other ingredients to make a product, the brocha is usually *mezonos*, even if the amount used does not constitute the majority of the product. However, this only applies if the flour is used to add flavor. If it is only used as a binder to improve the consistency and texture of the product, the brocha will not be *mezonos*. When the ingredient from the five grains is not listed first on the ingredient list and the consumer is not sure, he should consult with his personal Rav or the kosher certifying agency. ©

<sup>1</sup> Alternatively, one can first say *mezonos* and *shehakol* on two different foods.

# Chanukah

From Keeping in Touch Vol. 1

by Rabbi Eli Touger

**D**uring their occupation of the Holy Land, the Greeks entered the Temple and defiled all the vessels of olive oil they found. After their defeat, the Maccabees were able to find only one cruse of oil with the seal of the High Priest intact. Though it contained enough oil for only one day, the rekindled *Menorah* burned miraculously for eight days, enough time for new oil to be prepared.

The Greeks' defiling of the oil was obviously intentional and systematic; they neither used it nor destroyed it. What did they gain by defiling it?

This question can be answered by analyzing the nature of the conflict between the Greeks and the Jews. While building their empire, the Greeks did not usually attempt to eradicate indigenous populations. Instead, their goal was to Hellenize and assimilate them into their culture. This was their policy when they imposed their rule over *Eretz Yisrael*.

The Greeks appreciated the wisdom and beauty of the Torah. What they opposed was the concept of Torah as Gdly revelation. They would have liked the Jewish people to study Torah in the same way they would have studied human wisdom, without thinking of its Gdliness that transcends the bounds of intellect.

Likewise, the Greeks did not object to the fulfillment of the commandments per se, recognizing that every culture, including their own, has rituals. Their antagonism was aroused by the idea that *mitzvos* are a unique means of connecting to Gd which take us beyond human limits.

In light of this, we can understand why the Greeks were so intent on defiling the oil. They wanted the *Menorah* to be lit with impure oil so that its light, symbolic

of the light of Torah, would shine forth not in its pristine purity, but with a human, Greek touch.

The Jews responded to this challenge with self-sacrifice that leaps beyond the limits of reason. Though they were pitted against the world's strongest military power, they were determined to fight, and even to surrender their lives, to maintain the spiritual purity of their heritage.

The self-sacrifice which they displayed is symbolized by the one cruse of oil which still bore the seal of the High Priest.

Every individual has his "one cruse of oil," begging to be discovered. A person may not uncover this internal connection to Gd in the ordinary circumstances of his life. But when challenged, as in the case of the Maccabees, this inner connection will surface. And when this Divine bond comes to the fore, "[Gd will] deliver the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few," for nothing can withstand its power.

In their struggle against the Greeks, the Maccabees tapped this resource - this single cruse of oil, revealing a level of soul that transcended their usual limits. In response, Gd revealed miracles that transcended the natural limits of this world.

The Chanukah miracle which followed serves as an eternal testimony to the essential connection to Gd that the Greeks sought to sever. In our day as well, the Chanukah lights remind us that through an appreciation of the infinite Gdly, dimension of the Torah and its commandments, we can kindle the potential for light we all possess within our souls.

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The Bais Yosef famously asks<sup>1</sup> why we celebrate Chanukah for 8 days when the actual miracle occurred for 7 days. There are many answers to this question but here are “8” interesting ones...

**1** The pure oil was made in a location that was 4 days' travel from the Beis HaMikdash. It took 4 days to get there and another 4 days to return. Since they could not travel on Shabbos, the oil only arrived at the Beis HaMikdash on the 9th day. The first day was not a miracle, but the other 8 were miraculous.

**2** When they filled up the menorah, the oil jug miraculously remained full.

**3** One of the things that the Greeks wanted to stop was the mitzvah of bris milah, so for that reason it was decided to celebrate Chanukah for 8 days.

**4** In the year that the Chanukah miracle took place, the 25th day of Kislev was on Shabbos, which meant they needed to light the menorah on Friday and they would have needed more than the regular amount of oil for the first day. The lone jug they found had exactly the amount that was needed for 24 hours, but a miracle happened and the oil burned until the end of Shabbos, so even the first day there was a miracle.

**5** We celebrate the first day to remember the joy the Chashmonayim had when entering the Beis HaMikdash and that were **not discouraged or downcast** by all the damage that was done. They were so **happy** to be able to return and rebuild the Beis HaMikdash that Hashem made a miracle that the jug of pure oil burned for eight days.

**6** The number eight represents going above nature. We celebrate for 8 days to emphasize the tremendous miracle that occurred when the tiny Chashmonayim army defeated the massive force of the Greeks.

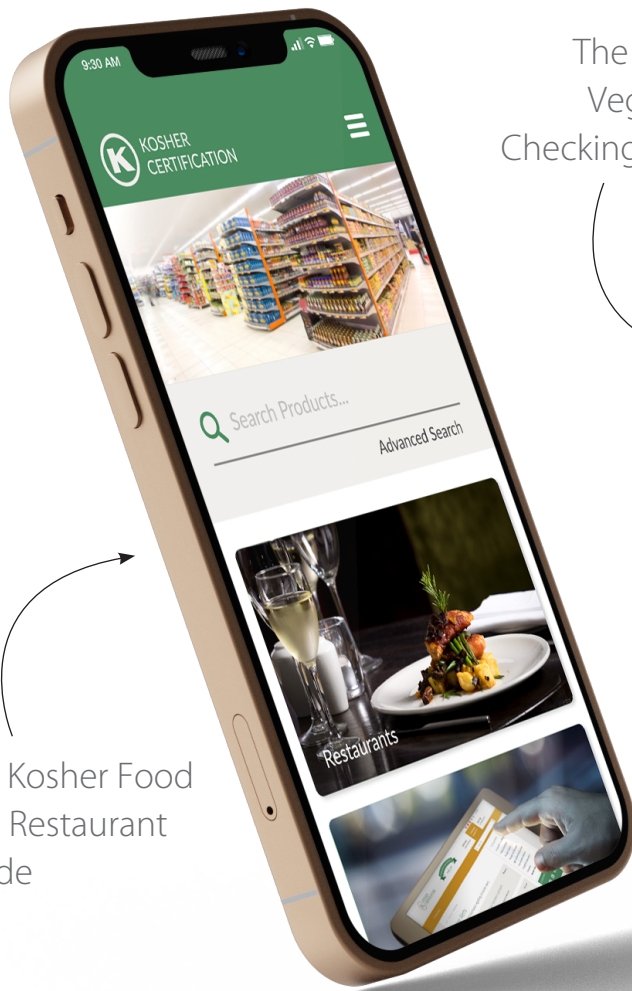
**7** The first day is a celebration of the miracle of finding a pure jug of oil.

**8** Since the Chashmonayim knew that they would not have oil for another 8 days, they decided to divide the oil that they had into equal parts so the menorah could at least burn for 3 hours each day. The little bit of oil they put in miraculously lasted 24 hours every day for eight days.



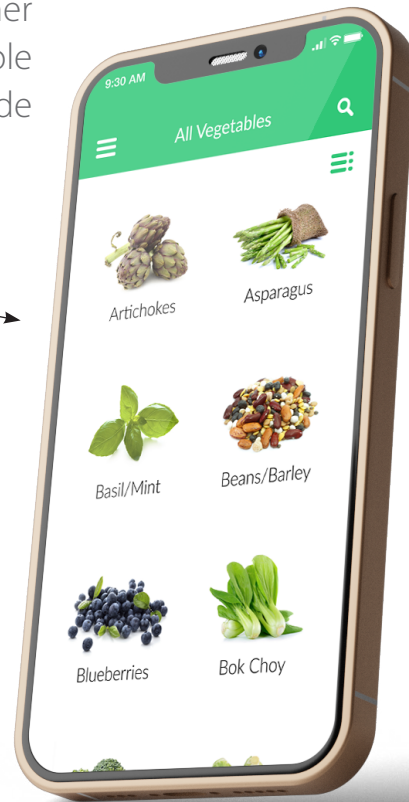
<sup>1</sup> Orach Chaim 670.

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