

THE Daf HaKASHRUS



A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE OU RABBINIC FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

GLASS LINED REACTORS

RABBI GAVRIEL PRICE

RC, Ingredient Research

MORE than once a mashgiach has been assigned to kasher a stainless steel reactor to learn later that the interior was lined with glass. The distinction is significant: stainless steel, which has a chromium alloy, is metal and can be kashered; glass has the halachic status of cheresh and, especially for Pesach, should not be kashered (see Rema O.C. 451, 26). Since the glass lining is on the interior of the vessel it's easy to make this mistake.

A mashgiach is most likely to encounter a glass-lined vessel – whether it's a reactor, a

pump, or a storage vessel – in the production of pharmaceutical products, which have low tolerance for heavy metal contamination. An OU company that blends pharmaceutical glaze, better known as shellac, with ethanol uses specifically a glass-lined reactor. The processor requested that the same reactor also be used for the production of dairy products, which would necessitate kashering the reactor periodically (in this case the unique design of the reactor permitted kashering).

Glass-lined vessels are not limited to pharmaceuticals. Last month a manufacturer of ethyl maltol, a chemical that provides a sweet-caramel note prized in the flavor industry, requested that the OU supervise a special Pesach production. One of the raw materials

used to make ethyl maltol is furfural. When evaluating the viability of kashering, the mashgiach learned that every vessel used to process furfural was glass-lined (whether this was because of the corrosiveness of furfural on stainless steel or for other reasons, it's not clear). These glass-lined vessels became the bottleneck to the project.

When developing a strategy for kashering vessels it is critical, therefore, to clarify what the interior is made from. One way to do this is by sticking your head into the vessel – if doing so is safe, legal, and conclusive. If not, the easiest way to research a vessel's status independently is simply to note the brand, model, and make of the vessel. The manufacturer's website should have technical information relevant to the product. ■

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

Rav Belsky's skype shiur is vastly appreciated by kollel audience in Melbourne, Australia

RAV YISROEL BELSKY, OU Kosher halachic posek, is an extremely soft-spoken man, but through the wonders of modern communications, his voice and image carried 10,300 miles as he conducted the first of a series of five monthly lectures on Skype from the experts at OU Kashrus in NY to the students at the Kollel Beth HaTalmud in Melbourne, Australia. A program of OU Kosher's Harry H. Beren ASK OU Outreach initiative, the sessions will deal with various aspects of kosher law and their application to modern food technology. The program is coordinated by Rabbi Yosef Grossman, OU Kosher Senior Educational Rabbinic Coordinator.

The first installment, held in late November, originated at 5:00 p.m. New York time, which was 9:00 a.m. the next day in Melbourne. An audience of more than 100 was present at the kollel for the webcast.

Rav Belsky's shiur was on *The Mesorah of Kosher Birds and Animals*. Among the species he covered were the giraffe, buffalo, zebu, peacock, mallard duck, and Canadian goose. In response to a question from a shochet in New Zealand, OU Kosher's bird expert, Rabbi Chaim Loike, brought in a live Indian Runner duck for Rabbi Belsky to determine whether or not the bird is kosher -- it is.

Rabbi Yisroel Greenwald, project coordinator at the kollel, wrote to Rabbi Grossman, "Although we were geographically on the other side of the globe, everyone present at the shiur felt as connected to Rabbi Belsky as if he were actually sitting together with us in one



How New York looked in Melbourne

room. Everyone at the kollel already knew of the Rav's greatness in Torah, but we were equally amazed by his breadth of scientific knowledge and his ability to convey complicated Torah concepts in such an enjoyable manner."

In another message, Rabbi Greenwald wrote, "Thank you, thank you for the unbelievable shiur! It was a masterpiece -- everyone loved it -- *m'koton v'ad godol* (We also loved the duck.) We had close to a hundred people and I am also looking into making a local showing in the evening for those ... who were not able to attend. It's a great opportunity to have the zechus to hear a shiur from an *adom godol* as Rav Belsky, and we are eagerly anticipating the others as well."

The next program will feature Rabbi Chaim Goldberg on kosher fish, Thursday December 20, 5:00 p.m. New York time, which is Friday, December 21, 9:00 a.m. down under. ■

PROPYLENE GLYCOL AND EPICHLOROHYDRIN

Reevaluating Two Group One Ingredients

RABBI GAVRIEL PRICE

RC, Ingredient Research

BIODIESEL companies convert oils and fats to fuel, a process that yields glycerin as a byproduct. The growth of biodiesel in the last decade has created a continuous glut of glycerin, resulting in prices low enough that chemical engineers have developed ways to use glycerin as a building block to make chemicals conventionally made using costlier methods. Two have become commercially successful, and each has a consequence for kashrus.

ADM has succeeded in turning glycerin into propylene glycol, which is conventionally made from petrochemicals. It is used to extract flavors from botanicals, as a humectant (it provides moisture), and as a solvent.

Propylene glycol has always been considered, from a kashrus perspective, innocuous. Using glycerin, which can come from animal fat, to produce propylene glycol would rob this chemical of its innocuousness. The ADM site is, however, certified by the OU. It is the only site in the world in which glycerin is used to make propylene glycol.

Propylene glycol can therefore be assumed to be kosher, and remains a group one.

This status is, however, fragile. If ADM were to choose to use non-kosher glycerin as a feedstock and drop its certification – even for a temporary campaign -- or if another manufacturer were to produce propylene glycol from glycerin and not seek certification, a percentage of the propylene glycol in the market would be non-kosher, without possibility of distinguishing one from another.

Solvay Chemical in Thailand has been producing epichlorohydrin from glycerin supplied by an uncertified biodiesel company, and has recently announced a parallel project in China. It is rare that one sees epichlorohydrin in the food industry, but it does have some narrow applications as a solvent in foods and flavors when reacted with other chemicals. Like propylene glycol, it has traditionally been made using petrochemicals (in fact, when glycerin fetched a higher price than it does now, epichlorohydrin was a building block in the production of synthetic glycerin).

Epichlorohydrin is no longer a group one.

COPPER CHLOROPHYLL

RABBI ELI GERSTEN

RC, Recorder of OU Psak and Policy

RABBI GAVRIEL PRICE

RC, Ingredient Research

COPPER CHLOROPHYLL is a green colorant used in foods and beverages. The standard method of production, according to our references, is by extracting the colorant from plant material like alfalfa and fescue. It has been a group one.

We recently learned that the Chinese have been obtaining copper chlorophyll from the dung of a silkworm. Should it remain a group one?

Rav Belsky ruled that because silkworm dung is פירש (digested waste) it remains permitted. פירש is not applicable to אסור.

The Maharim Ibn Chaviv rules that excrement of an insect is permitted:

בדברי מהר"ם אבן חביב, שהביאו הרב מחזיק ברכה בס' פ"ד אות ל"ו ו"ל, הזכירים המטילים ביציהם בבשר בימות החמה, והם כמו גרעני חרדל לבנים, צריך לבדוקם ולהדיח הבשר יפה יפה, שלא ישאר אפילו אחת, ומיהו יש אומרים דהני גרעינים המטילים הזכורים וכו' אינם ביצי זבובים, אלא מן רוקם וצואתם מתהווים, והראיה שאינם נעשים אח"כ זבובים אלא תולעים, וכל עוד שלא נעשו תולעים הוא כפרשא בעלמא ושרו, וצ"ע ושומר נפשו ירחק מהם עכ"ל

One provision – copper chlorophyll should only be eaten in such a way that there is no issue of תשקצו (eating, drinking, or doing something that is disgusting). Since it is used only as a food colorant and not eaten by itself, this should not be a problem.



OU bird expert Rabbi Chaim Loike (with feathered friend) and OU Senior Halachic Posek Rav Chaim Yisroel Belsky

INDIAN RUNNER DUCK

Is this variety of duck kosher? In response to a question from a shochet in New Zealand, *OU Kosher Rabbinic Coordinator and bird expert* Rabbi Chaim Loike brought in a live Indian Runner duck for Rav Chaim Yisroel Belsky, *OU Senior Halachic Posek*, to determine whether or not the bird is kosher -- it is.

The duck was featured this week as Rav Belsky conducted the first of a series of five monthly lectures on Skype from the experts at OU Kashrut in New York to the students at the Kollel Beth HaTalmud in Melbourne, Australia. Rav Belsky's shiur was on *The Mesorah of Kosher Birds and Animals*. Among the other species he covered were the giraffe, buffalo, zebu, peacock, mallard duck, and Canadian goose.

The program, coordinated by Rabbi Yosef Grossman, *OU Kosher Senior Educational Rabbinic Coordinator*, is the newest project of the OU Kosher's Harry H. Beren ASK OU Outreach initiative, for which sessions will deal with various aspects of kosher law and their application to modern food technology.

CONSUMER Q&A

Q: WHY WOULD A GENERALLY KNOWN CERTIFIED PRODUCT BE MISSING AN OU LOGO?

A. There are a variety of reasons why a product may sometimes appear with an OU and sometimes without. Here are a few of those possibilities:

- ▶ Printing error
- ▶ Different sizes of the same product are made on different production lines or at facilities that are not certified.
- ▶ The product without the OU symbol is manufactured in a non-certified plant.
- ▶ The product without the OU is an old batch that was manufactured prior to OU supervision.

Since it is not possible to know why an OU symbol is absent just by looking at the package, consumers are encouraged to contact our Kashrus hotline at (212) 613-8241 for individual product clarification.

Q: CAN COFFEE BE PURCHASED AT NON-CERTIFIED RESTAURANTS?

A. It is not possible to make one universal statement about the kashrus of coffee prepared in a non-certified restaurant because each establishment is unique. Investigation has shown that theoretically, coffee served in a restaurant may be kosher even if the equipment used to prepare the coffee is washed in a sink together with other non-kosher items. However, there are numerous variables which impact the Halachic status, such as the introduction of soap, the temperature of the water, the method of washing (klishon versus kli shaini) etc. Due to the uncertainty and ambiguity of each situation, as a general rule, the OU does not recommend the consumption of coffee prepared in a non-kosher restaurant.

Q: CAN COFFEE BE PURCHASED FROM CONVENIENCE STORES, REST STOPS, AND KIOSKS?

A. In contrast to the response given regarding coffee prepared in a non-certified restaurant, it would be permissible to purchase a cup of coffee from a convenience store, rest stop or kiosk. This is due to the fact that the kashrus concerns noted for the restaurants are not applicable to an establishment that does not make its own food or use industrial cleaning devices which tend to reach very high temperatures.

Q: WHAT IS THE CERTIFICATION STATUS OF YOGURT AND ICE CREAM STORES NAMED FOR BRANDS THAT ARE OU CERTIFIED?

A. There are many ice cream and yogurt stores bearing the brand name of an OU certified company and/or that sell OU certified product, however the OU generally does not certify the store itself. In such instances, the OU certification extends only as far as a sealed container bearing the OU symbol. Once the container is opened, the OU can no longer vouch for the kosher integrity of the item. For example, while an opened container of ice cream may bear an OU-D, the kosher status may have been compromised by a scoop that was used previously for non-certified flavors. If the entire store is certified, that will be reflected on the OU letter of certification.



Yeshiva Meor HaTorah of Boro Park took part in a Harry H. Beren VISIT OU program visiting Oasis Foods in Hillside, NJ and Arizona Tea's plant in Maplewood, NJ. At Arizona they toured the plant and learned about plate pasteurizers and are seen holding a plate. Rabbi Adler, the group's rebbe, is seen on left. Nick Demario, the plant manager, is seen third from right.



KASHRUS ALERT

Some jars of **SERA GRAPE MOLASSES** produced by Korhan Pazarlama Ve Dis Tic A.S. Istanbul, Turkey mistakenly bear an unauthorized OU. This particular Sera product is not certified by the Orthodox Union. It was distributed for sale in Europe. Corrective actions have been implemented.

SPRINGFIELD SEMI SWEET CHOCOLATE CHIPS produced by Unified Grocers Inc. Commerce, CA are certified as an OU-D Dairy product. The product contains milk derivatives. Recently, some bags were printed with a plain OU, without the "D" dairy designation. The mislabeled products are being withdrawn from the marketplace.

WINN DIXIE WOVEN WHEAT CRACKERS produced by Winn Dixie, Jacksonville, FL are certified by the Orthodox Union as a kosher pareve product. Some packaging mistakenly bear an OUP symbol. This product is not kosher for Passover. The mislabeled products are being withdrawn from the marketplace.



to our dedicated RFR in South Florida **RABBI ELI CASPER AND HIS WIFE** on the birth of their daughter, Natanya Golda.

to our devoted RFR in San Jose, CA **RABBI NOACH VOGEL AND HIS WIFE** on the engagement of their son Chaim to Nissel Huss of Montreal, Canada.

CONDOLENCES

to the family of our dedicated RFR in Brooklyn, NY **RABBI YECHIEL ZISKIND**, Z'l on his recent petirah.

to our devoted administrative assistant **RIVKA MONOKER** on the recent loss of her father Yehoshua of Brooklyn, NY.

המקום יתנם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

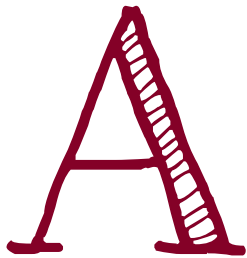


What do all these world-class institutions have in common?

*Aish HaTorah – Passaic
Bialystoker Synagogue
Boston University – JLIC
Brandeis University*

*Bruriah High School for Girls
Columbia Law School
Fuchs Mizrahi School
Hasten Hebrew Academy*

*North Shore Hebrew Academy
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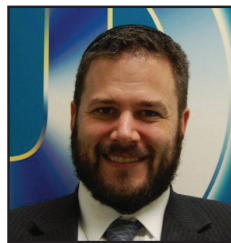
They've hosted
a world-class
expert on kashrut
from OU Kosher

*Hebrew Academy of
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Joseph Kushner Hebrew
Academy
Lower East Side Bais
Yaakov
Maimonides School
Manhattan High
School for Girls
Mirrer Yeshiva*

*Shulamith School
for Girls
Soilee Hebrew Day School
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A Bonus for Mezonot: Certifying Cakes and Cookies • Kosher Ice Cream: Cold Facts
about a Hot Topic • The Kashrut of Fish: Of Fins and Scales and Tuna Tales
... and we will be happy to address any topic of interest to you.*

Go to www.oukosher.org for all of your kashrut information.
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**For more information,
contact Rabbi
Eliyahu Safran at
safrane@ou.org**



Orthodox Union, Eleven Broadway, New York, NY 10004 | www.oukosher.org | 212.613.8115