

# Kashrus Kurrents

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## Undercover: The Halachos of Schach

RABBI MOSHE HEINEMANN  
STAR-K RABBINIC ADMINISTRATOR

When our *Torah* speaks about the Festival of *Sukkos* it states, “*Chag HaSukkos Taaseh Lecha B’Aspecha Migornecha U’Miyikvecha.*”<sup>1</sup> The *Sukkos* holiday should be observed at the time “that you harvest your grain and your wine,” during the fall. Our *Chachamim*, sages, have taught us that this *pasuk* has another esoteric meaning. The *sukkah*, in which we dwell during this *chag*, should be made from the unused parts of the harvested grain and wine, namely the stalks of grain and twigs of the vine. These are the items that should be used for the *schach*, the covering, which is placed on top of the *sukkah* instead of a permanent roof.

Our Rabbis have further taught that this directive, *pesoles goren v’yekev*, includes other items that are similar to stalks and twigs that are no longer attached to the ground and cannot become ritually impure, *tamei*. Unfinished wood slats, corn stalks, and palm branches are popular varieties that satisfy the criteria for *schach*.

Many natural materials are not qualified to be used for *schach*. Leather is a natural product that does not grow from the ground; neither do cement nor natural materials such as metal. None of these may be used for *schach*. All types of foods are not kosher material for *schach*. Included in this *halachah* are grain husks that have some grains remaining in the husks. Wood products that are cut and shaped into vessels, utensils, or equipment that is tubular, would not qualify as *schach* because these products can become *tamei*. Furthermore, even if the wood vessels were to be broken and unfit for their original use, and can no longer become *tamei*, they remain disqualified.

Although hollow, bent wooden pipes would not be kosher for *schach*, hollow bamboo poles would be kosher because they grow hollow naturally, and were not fashioned by anyone with the intention of putting things into their opening. Similarly, straight wooden pipes without indentations would be kosher, as well as wooden beams, even those with imperfections in the wood. However, the custom is not to use them.

Stems that are used for *schach* must be in their original state and cannot be subject to further processing. For example, wood is kosher while paper is not. Flax stems are kosher but flax rope is not. Cotton wool, which has been combed out and no longer resembles the natural cotton plant, would no longer qualify as *schach*.

Flax rope is problematic for another reason. According to *Rashi*, if the linen fibers were twisted into threads and braided into rope, they are *posul min HaTorah*. The *Torah* disqualifies them as it does any other woven material.

<sup>1</sup> Devarim 16:13

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## Drinking Responsibly:

### Taking Stock of the Star-K Liquor List

RABBI TZVI ROSEN  
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#### INTRODUCTION:

Since the appearance of the first Star-K approved liquor list over 12 years ago, the liquor industry has become visibly spirited, sophisticated and very high profile. As society moves in that direction, so has the kosher consumer. Whether or not this is meritorious is not for us to editorialize. However, *baruch Hashem*, life cycle *simchos* continue to abound, and a hearty *l’chaim* is still an integral part of sharing in one’s *simchos*. Briefly, *Kashrus Kurrents* wants to update its readership concerning the past and current trends that have taken place, as well as how we arrived at our conclusions under the direction of our esteemed *Rav Hamachshir*, *Harav Moshe Heinemann, shlita*.

There has virtually been little change in American whiskeys. Bourbon by law has to be at least 51% corn and is aged in new oak charred casks. Canadian whiskey may contain flavorings and a very small percentage of OTS (other than standard) grape wine. Crown Royal is the only Canadian whiskey that has informed Star-K that they are grape wine-free.

It has come to our attention that Irish whiskeys may add wine in small percentages. Similarly, wine and glycerin may be added to tequilas. The

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# Undercover: The Halachos of Schach



**RABBI MOSHE HEINEMANN**  
STAR-K RABBINIC ADMINISTRATOR

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Branches of a tree cannot be used for *schach* if the branches are still connected to their original source. If the branch was still connected to the tree while covering the *sukkah* and was then cut down, the branch would still be disqualified, unless a person lifted the branch and then replaced it on the *sukkah* with the intention of using the branch for *schach*. Our Rabbis have taught us that *schach* that has an unpleasant odor should preferably not be used. Use of *schach* that has a pervasive foul smell is forbidden. Kosher *schach* has to remain fresh throughout the entire *chag*. Branches with leaves that will dry out during *Sukkos*, or vines that will shrivel, are disqualified and are not kosher even while the leaves are still fresh.

Kosher *schach* material must be placed on top of the *sukkah* with the intention of being used for *schach*. One cannot place kosher *schach* material on top of the *sukkah* with the intention of drying the material, and then change his mind in the course of the drying process and use it for *schach*. To this end, the *halachah* forbids the use of bundled *schach* if it is generally subject to drying. Moreover, our Rabbis forbade the use of this bundled kosher *schach*, even if it was intended for *schach*. This restriction applies to bundles of 25 sticks or more that are tied in the middle or at both ends.

How wide can the boards be in order to qualify as kosher *schach*? One may use boards that are less than 4 *tefachim* (14") wide. Even if wider boards would be set on their sides, these boards would not be kosher. It is the custom not to use narrower finished wood planks generally used in construction.

As was stated previously, the criteria for *schach* are threefold: 1) items that grow from the ground, 2) items that are no longer attached to the ground, and 3) items that cannot become *tamei*. Reeds, straw, or wooden slats that are woven into mats would not qualify as *schach* if they were woven for the purpose of sitting or sleeping upon, as well as any other specific function. However, if they were made expressly for *schach*, these mats would be kosher.

Are bamboo mats that are held together with other materials, such as string or yarn, kosher? *HaRav* Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*, ruled that venetian blinds that were made out of wooden slats and held together with cloth tape, which is *mekabel tumah*, are not kosher. Even if the tape is removed, the slats remain non-kosher and disqualified for use as *schach*. Based on *Rav* Moshe's reasoning, even if a mat was manufactured for no specific reason, since the slats were held together by cloth tape, the mats would be considered an item that is *mekabel tumah* and could not, *halachically*, be used for *schach*. Mats held together with braided nylon filament thread would be disqualified for the same reason, since according to *Rashi* they are considered to be woven. However, monofilament line would not be disqualified for this reason, because a monofilament line merely holds the slats together and is not woven. Therefore, if the wooden mats were made for *schach* using monofilament line, the mats would be kosher.<sup>2</sup>

A kosher monofilament mat must be placed on the *sukkah* in the proper manner. The following guidelines must be followed: The bamboo slats should be placed perpendicular to the beams and walls upon which they rest. In other words, if the monofilament line (which does not qualify as *schach*) is supporting the slats, the mat has been placed down improperly. One may not suspend *schach* with non-*schach* material. Furthermore, *schach* mats must not be anchored with string to prevent the mat from blowing away in a normal wind (*a ruach metzuya*). For the same reason string, which is an improper *schach* material, cannot be used for anchoring. Instead, a kosher wooden beam may be placed across the mat in order to hold it down.

Can kosher mats contain more than 25 slats, or would the mat be considered a bundle (*chavila*)? Since the mat does not need to be dried, it may contain more than 25 slats without qualifying as a bundle.

There is a rabbinical question as to whether one can support the *schach* with something that is not kosher for use as *schach*. Therefore, one should not support the *schach* with anything that can become *tamei*, i.e. metal rods or pipes. Also, one cannot use metal to weigh down the *schach* so that it will not blow off with an ordinary wind. One may, however, hold down

the support with something that is not kosher for use as *schach*. If the *schach* is supported by wooden beams, which are used to strengthen the *schach* to prevent it from blowing away in an unusual wind, then nails or string may be used as a support to the beams.

How much *schach* should be used to cover the *sukkah*? The amount required is determined by the amount necessary to shade the *sukkah*. The *schach* must be dense enough so that there should not be more sunlight than shade. However, it cannot be so dense that the rain would not be able to fall into the *sukkah*.

We have just mentioned some of the *dinim* of *schach*. There are many more *halachos*, however, this article does not allow for a more elaborate discussion. In case of questions, a *halachic* authority should be consulted.

*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* should help us to properly fulfill the *mitzvah* of *sukkah*, so that we may merit to see with our own eyes His tabernacle of peace spread over the entire Jewish nation and *Yerushalayim*.

<sup>2</sup> In *Hilchos Sukkah* (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 629:1) it is written that *schach* cannot consist of something that is "*mekabel tumah*." It is for this reason that bamboo carpet mats cannot be used for *schach*. In addition, *l'chatchila*, kosher *schach* may not be supported by anything which is *mekabel tumah* (see *Rama, O.C.* 629:7). According to the opinion of *Rashi* (as brought in *Shaar Hatziyun* 629:20), spun or woven threads (e.g. string, yarn) are *mekabel tumah*. *Rav* Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*, states (*Igros Moshe, O.C.* 1:177) based on a *Mishna*, if something which is *mekabel tumah* is used to hold wooden slats together, the slats themselves are also *mekabel tumah* and are no longer kosher for *schach* use. Therefore, *Rav* Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*, explains that wooden venetian blinds held together with something woven are not kosher for *schach*. It follows that according to *Rashi*, bamboo slats held together by multi-filament cord (i.e. it is braided or twisted) are also not kosher *schach* (even if they are not made to sit or walk on).



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# Insights from the Institute

SHAILOS FROM THE INSTITUTE OF HALACHAH



RABBI MORDECHAI FRANKEL  
DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF HALACHAH

**Q:** I had a bottle of wine stored in the shelving unit on the door of my refrigerator. I was in the kitchen, and I saw my non-Jewish hired help open the refrigerator. She knows that she is not allowed to touch my wine, but did not pay attention to the fact that opening the refrigerator moves the wine on the door. Can I still drink the wine?

**A:** During the times of Chazal, it was common for non-Jews to pour wine libations as a means of serving idols. Such wine is called *yayin nesech*, and a Jew may not derive any benefit from this wine.<sup>1</sup> Due to this concern, Chazal enacted a *gezeira* which forbade the use of any wine which has been poured by a non-Jew, whether or not it was intended as a form of idol worship.<sup>2</sup> This wine is known as *stam yeinom*.<sup>3</sup> It is even forbidden to drink wine which has merely been touched by a non-Jew.<sup>4</sup> If a non-Jew touches a bottle containing wine, but does not move the bottle or touch the wine itself, the wine does not become *assur*.<sup>5</sup> However, if the non-Jew moves the bottle and shakes the wine, it may not be drunk.<sup>6</sup>

Sealed bottles of wine were not included within this prohibition and may be moved by a non-Jew. A closed bottle may also be moved by a non-Jew, as long as a Jew is present to ensure that the bottle was not opened.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, cooked wine was also not included in the prohibition, as this type of wine is of lower quality and would not be used for idol worship.<sup>8</sup> Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*, *paskens* that pasteurized wine has the same status as cooked wine.<sup>9</sup> Even though there is a minimal difference in taste between pasteurized and non-pasteurized wine, pasteurized wine is not included within the *gezeira* of Chazal.<sup>10</sup>

If a non-Jew is holding something in his hand and inadvertently touches wine with that object, a Jew may still drink the wine.<sup>11</sup> Indirect touching of the wine, if done inadvertently, does not render the wine *assur*. If the non-Jew purposely touches the wine with the object that he was holding, the wine should not be drunk. However, in a situation of considerable financial loss one may be lenient.<sup>12</sup>

Let us now analyze the situation of the hired help who opened the refrigerator door that contained a bottle of wine. Since the owner of the wine was present, and the hired help knows that she is not allowed to touch the wine, it is clear that she did not open the bottle.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, if the bottle of wine was closed it may be drunk, as Chazal did not extend this *gezeira* to closed bottles of wine. Even if the bottle was open, it may also be drunk if the wine was pasteurized, as the *gezeira* did not include cooked wine. If the wine was not pasteurized and the bottle was open, but the non-Jew did not know that

there was a bottle of wine in the door, a Jew may still drink the wine. This is due to the fact that the non-Jew unintentionally moved the bottle of wine indirectly, and this does not make the wine *assur*. Rav Heinemann, *shlit"l*, *paskens* that even if the non-Jew was aware of the bottle of wine in the door, if she opened the door simply in order to gain access to the refrigerator, it would still be classified as inadvertent indirect moving, and a Jew would be permitted to drink the wine.<sup>14</sup>

It should be noted that a non-Jew should not be left unsupervised in the vicinity of an unsealed bottle of unpasteurized wine, as there is no way to guarantee that he will



not open the bottle and move it.<sup>15</sup> To avoid this, a Jew can reseal the bottle of wine by placing tape over the cap of the bottle in such a manner that he will be aware of any tampering.<sup>16</sup>

*Halachic queries regarding all topics may be presented to The Institute of Halachah at the Star-K by calling 410-484-4110 ext. 238 or emailing halachah@star-k.org.*

<sup>1</sup> ע"ז דף כט ע"ב <sup>2</sup> ע"י שרש שם דף לא ע"א ד"ה סתם ותוסי' שם דף כט ע"ב ד"ה יין <sup>3</sup> שם דף לא ע"א <sup>4</sup> שרע יוד שם קכג סעי' יג, וע"י בש"ד שם סק ל <sup>5</sup> רמ"א שם סעי' יח וש"ד שם סק מג <sup>6</sup> ע"י בשרע שם סעי' יז, וברמ"א שם כתב שאם שכשך הכלי בלא הגבהה אין להחמיר במקום פסודא, ובשרע שם סעי' יח כתב שאם הגביה ולא שכשך ולא נגע ביין מותר, וע"י בט"ז שם סק ו וסיק א <sup>7</sup> ע"י בשרע שם סעי' כה וט"ז שם סק לד וש"ד שם סק עד <sup>8</sup> שרע שם סק קכג סעי' ג וש"ד שם סק ו וט"ז שם סק ג <sup>9</sup> שרע אגמ"י יוד ח"ב סי' נב, וסיים שם שמדת החו"ס לענין להתחשב יין מבוטל הוא די סולדת בו ואף שכתב הש"ד שם קכג סק ז דבעינן שתמנעט ממדתו ע"י רתיחה מינ' גם ביד סולדת כבר נתמנעט משתן, וממ"ר ר' היינעמאן שליט"א שמעתי שבזמנינו שעושים יין מפורסטר בכלים סגורים יתכן שהיין לא נתמנעט ממדתו ולכן במקום שעושים יין מפורסטר תחת השגחת Star-K מאקפידין שיהיה פתח להכלי כדי שהיין יתמנעט ממדתו <sup>10</sup> ע"י בשרע מנחת שלמה ח"א סי' כה ובקובץ תשובות להגרי"ש אלישיב שליט"א ח"א סי' עה שחולקים וסוברים שיון מפורסטר אין דינו כיון מבוטל לענין זה, וע"י בשרע יב"ע אומר ח"ה יוד סי' טו משיב על דבריהם <sup>11</sup> שרע שם סק קכד סעי' כד <sup>12</sup> ע"י ברמ"א שם, ובש"ד שם סק ע"א הביא בשם המהר"ל שאין להחמיר אלא במקום הפסד מרובה, ועוד כתב שכן קיבל מאביו שאין להקל אלא במקום הפסד <sup>13</sup> ע"י בשרע שם סק קכט סעי' א ובש"ד שם סק קכח סק א שהיין מותר בשתייה אפילו אם אין הישראל שם אם העכרם מירתת שמא יבא ישראל ויראהו נוגע, והיינו דוקא כשהעכרם יודע דמגע עכרם אסור לישראל כמשיב הש"ד שם <sup>14</sup> שמעתי ממ"ר ר' היינעמאן שליט"א <sup>15</sup> ע"י ברמ"א שם סק קכח סעי' א שלכתחלה אין מיוחדים יין עם עכרם, וכ"כ הרמ"א שם סק קכט סעי' א שלכתחלה אין להניח יין בביתו כלל כשיש עם עכרם בלבד, וע"י בש"ד שם סק ד, וע"י בש"ד שם סק יח ק"ח סק לב שכתב להחמיר לכתחלה כשישראל יוצא ונכנס תוך זמן מועט, וע"י בחלקת בנימין שם סק צו ובביאורים ד"ה אם משיב בזה, ולענין בדיעבד ע"י ברמ"א שם סק קכט סעי' ד שבה"ז אפילו כשאין העכרם מירתת מותר בדיעבד א"כ יש לחוש שנגעו לשותת ממנו מיהו אם הוא בקנקן שיש לחוש שמא נגע בו דרך מתעסק חיישינן, וע"י בש"ד שם סק קכט סק י <sup>16</sup> ע"י בט"ז שם סק יח ק"ח סק ד



# Insights from the Institute

**Q:** Can one send a Fed-Ex or UPS package on Friday to be delivered on *Shabbos*?

**A:** A Jew is allowed to pay a non-Jew a fixed amount to perform a certain task, even if it is a task that cannot be carried out by a Jew on *Shabbos*, and he knows that the non-Jew may carry it out on *Shabbos*. This is because the non-Jew has not been instructed to work at the task specifically on *Shabbos*, and doing so is his own decision.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, you may pay a non-Jew a fixed amount to sew an article of clothing, even though the non-Jew may decide to do so on *Shabbos*.<sup>2</sup> However, if it is not possible for the non-Jew to finish the clothing in the allotted time without working on *Shabbos*, then it is forbidden, as this is tantamount to asking him to work for you on *Shabbos*.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, you may pay a non-Jew a fixed amount to deliver mail, and if the non-Jew delivers it on *Shabbos* that is his own decision. However, you cannot explicitly tell him to deliver the mail on *Shabbos*.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, you may not tell him to deliver it on Sunday or Monday, if you know that he will have to travel on *Shabbos* in order to deliver it on time.<sup>5</sup>

The *Shulchan Aruch* writes that if you know that a non-Jew is going to a certain location you may certainly give him mail to deliver, as he will not be doing any extra activity on your behalf.<sup>6</sup> The *Mishna Berura* states that this is true only if it is possible that he will arrive before *Shabbos*. However, if you know that the non-Jew will not arrive at the final destination before the onset of *Shabbos*, the ruling would not apply as this would be equivalent to instructing the non-Jew to carry your mail on *Shabbos*.<sup>7</sup>

The *Teshuvos Shevus Yaakov* was asked whether one is allowed to mail a letter on Friday, if he knows that it may be delivered on *Shabbos*. The *Shevus Yaakov* permits this, due to the fact that one did not specifically instruct a non-Jew to deliver the mail on *Shabbos*. Although the postal service may decide to do so, that is their prerogative.<sup>8</sup> The *Shevus Yaakov* then discusses whether or not one may actually request that the mail be delivered on *Shabbos*, and suggests a possible case for leniency. In this instance, the non-Jew who receives the request does not actually deliver the mail himself; rather, he relates it to another non-Jew who then carries out the instructions. However, the *Shevus Yaakov* concludes that this leniency should be relied upon only if there is a great need.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the *Mishna Berura* states that asking one non-Jew to tell another non-Jew to perform a *melacha* on *Shabbos* should be done only in times of great need.<sup>10</sup>

Other *poskim* suggest a further possible reason to be lenient. When a person puts a package in the mail, that package is shipped together with many other pieces of mail. Any *melacha* that the postal worker performs on *Shabbos* is not specifically

carried out for the Jew and would be done in any case. For example, a courier who carries a sack of mail containing a package would be doing so anyway, and the Jew's package merely adds slightly to the weight that he is already carrying. Conceptually, this is similar to the following:

If necessary, one is permitted to cook meat on *Shabbos* in order to feed someone who has a life threatening illness. However, consider the case of a person who, before doing so, adds a piece of meat for himself. This person is legitimately engaged in the *melacha* of *bishul*, but has unnecessarily added to the amount of *bishul*. There is a difference of opinion as to whether this is forbidden by the *Torah* or *Chazal*.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, when sending express mail to be delivered on *Shabbos*, one is requesting that the non-Jew add to a sack of mail which he is legitimately carrying on *Shabbos*. In essence, one is asking a non-Jew to tell another non-Jew to add to a *melacha* which is already being executed. Some *poskim* feel that this would be permissible,<sup>12</sup> especially in light of the fact that the non-Jew who delivers the mail is simply doing his job and has no idea that he is acting on the Jew's behalf.<sup>13</sup>

However, other *poskim* point out that at the final stage of the delivery, the courier drives to the location of the recipient and hand delivers the package. These activities are carried out solely on behalf of the Jew who mailed the package, and would not be done otherwise. Furthermore, the *Mishna Berura* concurs with the viewpoint that adding to a *melacha* is forbidden *min haTorah*.<sup>14</sup> For these reasons, the *Minchas Yitzchok paskens* that one should send a Fed-Ex



or UPS package on Friday that needs to be delivered on *Shabbos* only in cases of great need.<sup>15</sup>

Some *poskim* have stated that a person should not send such a package, even if he tells the Fed-Ex agent that he does not need it delivered until Sunday. Since Fed-Ex does not operate on Sunday, this is equivalent to asking them to deliver the package on *Shabbos*.<sup>16</sup> However, Rav Heinemann, *shlit"z*, takes issue with this.

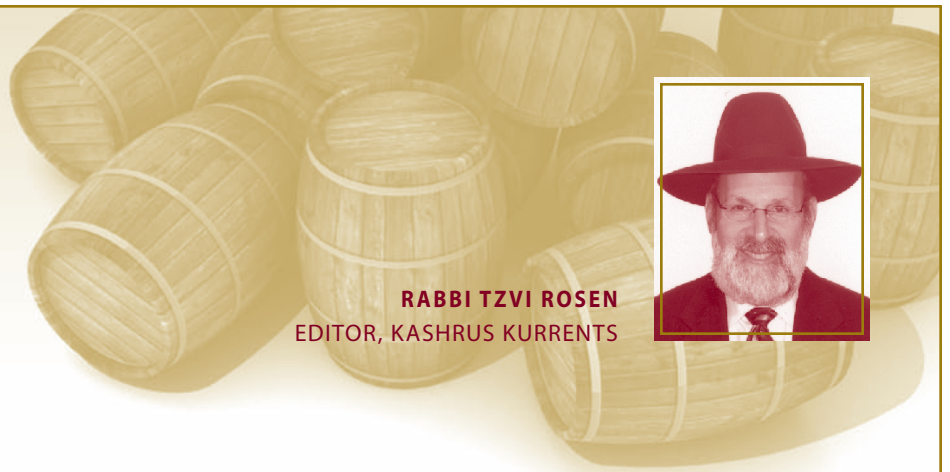
Rav Heinemann *paskens*<sup>17</sup> that a person sending a Fed-Ex package on Friday, to be delivered on *Shabbos*, should do the following: When speaking to the agent, he should state that he needs the recipient to get the package on Sunday. He should explain that, even though he is paying for Saturday delivery, it makes no difference to him whether Fed-Ex delivers it on Saturday or Sunday. Although Fed-Ex does not work on Sunday, and will certainly deliver it on *Shabbos*, it becomes their decision to do so and not something that they were instructed to do. It should be noted that it is necessary to make the above statement to the agent, and not merely think it.<sup>18</sup>

*Halachic queries regarding all topics may be presented to The Institute of Halachah at the Star-K by calling 410-484-4110 ext. 238 or emailing halachah@star-k.org.*

<sup>1</sup> שרע ארע סיי רמד טעי' א' שרע שם טעי' ה' <sup>2</sup> מ'ב שם טקי' כד, והוסיף המ'ב שאף אם אפשר לעכרם לאנוס עצמו לעסוק בלינה ועי' יוכל לנמור בחול מ'מ הוי זה כמ'צוה לו לעשות בשבת <sup>3</sup> שרע שם סיי רמו טעי' א' <sup>4</sup> מ'ב שם טקי' ד' <sup>5</sup> שרע שם טעי' ה' <sup>6</sup> מ'ב שם טקי' ז', ועי' בשע'רע שם טקי' ז' <sup>7</sup> שרת שבות יעקב ר'ב סיי מ'ב, ועי' משיכ' בשרת אגרות משה אר'ח ר'ג ס'ס מו שראוי למנוע במקום שרבים מן העובדים בבית דואר הם יהודים <sup>8</sup> בשרת שבות יעקב שם כתב שיש להקל במקום צורך גדול, והובא דבריו בשרת מהרש"ם ר'ב ס'ס קל' <sup>9</sup> מ'ב'ב סיי ש' טקי' כד כתב שבמקום הפסד גדול יש לסמוך על המקלין לאמר לעכרם שיאמר לעכרם אחר לעשות מלאכה בשבת <sup>10</sup> מ'ג'א סיי ש' טקי' ו' <sup>11</sup> עי' בשרת חלקת יעקב אר'ח סיי סו ושרת מחוה אברהם סיי לו <sup>12</sup> עי' בשרת אז נדברו ר'ג סיי לו' <sup>13</sup> עי' מ'ב'ב סיי ש' טקי' יג ובשע'רע סיי שטו' טקי' ל'ג <sup>14</sup> שרת מנחת יצחק ר'ז סיי י'ח, וכן פסק בשרת תשובות והנהגות ח'א אר'ח סיי ר'ע'ח'ב' <sup>15</sup> עי' בספר נשמת שבת ח'ה סיי ק'ה' <sup>16</sup> שמעתי ממר'ר ר' היינעמאן שליט"א <sup>17</sup> עי' בשרת אר'ג אר'ח ח'ד סיי י'ג וכתב להתייר לעכרם קבלן לעשות מלאכה בשבת בשביל ישראל כל שאפשר לו לעשותה גם ביום חול ואף במקום שאין לו זמן לעשותה ביום כל שיכול לעשותה בלינה יש להתייר, ובספר ה'ל' אמירה לעכרם ל'ר שמחה בוניס כ'ר ע'מ 65-67 הקשה על זה מדברי המ'ב סיי רמד טקי' כד הניל, ועירש' משיכ' בזה.

# Drinking Responsibly:

## Taking Stock of the Star-K Liquor List



RABBI TZVI ROSEN  
EDITOR, KASHRUS KURRENTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Silver (Blanco) variety of tequila is free of additives; otherwise, tequila requires supervision. The Star-K lists those brands of Irish whisky that are free of wine.

Flavored vodkas, flavored gin, vermouth, cognac and rum require kosher certification, as do all liqueurs and cordials. By law, flavors may be added to rum so we list those brands that do not add outside flavors. Unflavored gin and sake do not require certification. Sloe gin, a liqueur, requires reliable kosher certification.

Scotch, a most complex spirit, presents a challenge when trying to formulate a definitive *kashrus* policy. As we have noted in previous articles, scotch is aged in a combination of used bourbon and used wine casks, predominantly casks that were used to age sherry, port, Madeira or olorosso wines. By far, the greater percentage of casks used to age scotch are pre-used bourbon casks. Does the smaller percentage of sherry casks present a *halachic* problem? Some distillers will first age the scotch conventionally and then refill the scotch into sherry casks to complete the aging process, in order to impart a sherry taste into the scotch. Unquestionably, scotch that is aged exclusively in sherry casks has a sherry look, taste and smell pervading the scotch.

Star-K *halachic* policy maintains that any scotch that advertises on the label, neck tag, website, etc. as being aged, finished, double aged or refilled in sherry casks, or other wine casks, are not approved and are not acceptable. If there is no mention of sherry casks or any other variety of wine casks or refilling, the scotch is acceptable because the amount of sherry present would be *botul*<sup>1</sup> in the final product.

Without a doubt, buying alcohol with reliable kosher certification is the best way to ensure that it is flavored and aged *k'das uch'din*.

### CHOMETZ SHEAVAR ALAV HAPESACH:

As is the law with private Jewish consumers, Jewish merchants or Jewish manufacturers may not own *chometz* on *Pesach*. Included in this prohibition are grain derived beverages (i.e., those derived from barley, rye, oats, wheat or spelt). These products must be consumed or destroyed before *Pesach*. In the event that the volume of Jewish owned *chometz* is too great to be consumed or destroyed, the *chometz* may be sold to a non-Jew in a bona fide sale so that the *chometz* will be fully transferred out of Jewish ownership. Failing to do so will

render the unsold *chometz* forbidden for Jewish consumption after *Pesach*. These laws apply equally to any *chometz* that was in his possession during *Pesach*,<sup>2</sup> whether it is simply owned by a Jewish merchant, or produced by a Jewish manufacturer.

How does this prohibition impact on the alcoholic beverage industry? Most authorities<sup>3</sup> are of the opinion that alcoholic beverages such as whiskey, which is derived from wheat, barley or rye, are *chometz gamur*, and a person must not own these products on *Pesach*. If a Jew did not sell his liquor, the prohibition of *chometz she'avar alav haPesach* would apply; the whiskey may not be used, nor may any benefit be derived from these beverages.

What about the whiskey manufacturers? After years of research, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of companies producing spirits are either large corporations that are publicly owned or non-Jewish. There is a major American whiskey company that is Jewish owned and has been selling their *chometz* through the Orthodox Rav in Louisville, Kentucky for well over a decade. Moreover, the finished goods do not go directly to your neighborhood liquor store; they first go to large distributors that house great inventories of alcoholic beverages. In many large metropolitan areas, the owners of the liquor distribution companies are Jewish and do not sell their *chometz*.<sup>4</sup> In fact, one liquor manufacturer informed us that out of the 50 major liquor distributors used to distribute their products, 16 distributors are Jewish owned! There is little control over what is distributed on *Pesach*.

However, unless one knows for a fact that the liquor comes from a non-observant Jewish distributor, who did not sell his *chometz* and owned the alcohol over *Pesach*, or whether the whiskey comes from the local Jewish liquor proprietor who did not sell his *chometz* and owned the liquor over *Pesach*, one need not be *machmir*. *Chometz she'avar alav haPesach* is a rabbinic prohibition. In the event that we have a *safek*, a reasonable doubt regarding a rabbinic prohibition, the *halachah* allows us to take a lenient position.<sup>5</sup>

*Lchaim.*



<sup>1</sup> אריח סימן תמ"ח א

<sup>1</sup> יוד ס' קלו ה"ד ש"ך אות י"ז

<sup>2</sup> אריח סימן תמ"ח א

<sup>3</sup> ע"י משנה ברורה אריח סימן תמ"ב שיערי תשובה שם

<sup>4</sup> אריח סימן תמ"ח מ"ב ג שיערי תשובה שם

<sup>5</sup> ע"י אריח סימן תמ"ח ספק דרבנן לקולא





# Liquor & Liqueur List



## ACCEPTABLE LIQUORS

<b>Bourbon</b>	All: Straight and Blended				
<b>Brandy</b>	Certified: Armon*, Barkan*, Binyamina**, Bouka Fig*, Carmel*, Berghof-Kirsch*, Rodell*, Spirit of Solomon**, Seven Springs**, Grappa di Segal**, Grand Sabra Orange*				
<b>Canadian Whisky</b>	Approved: Crown Royal				
<b>Cognac</b>	Certified: Dupuy*, Godet**, Louis Royer*				
<b>Gin</b>	All: Except Sloe Gin (requires certification)		Certified: London Dry Gin*, Iceberg*		
<b>Irish Whisky</b>	Approved: Middleton Very Rare, Powers, Jameson-Regular		Certified: Kellan**		
<b>Rum</b>	Approved: Bacardi (unflavored)		Certified: Iceberg*, Jumbi (flavored)*		
<b>Rye</b>	All: Domestic Straight and Blended				
<b>Sake</b>	All: Unflavored imported to the U.S.				
<b>Scotch</b>	Certified: Hamashkeh**, Prince Lordon**, Glenrothes Alba Reserve**, Speyburn**				
	Approved: Single Malt and Blended. <i>Except when label states "aged in sherry casks", "sherry finish", "port finish", "madeira finish", "dual cask finish", double matured".</i>				
	Single Malt Scotches Aged Exclusively in Bourbon Barrels:				
	An Cnoc: 16	Clynelish: 14	Scapa: 14, 16	Balvenie: 15	Glenmorangie: 10 (Original), Cellar 13
	Auchentoshen Classic: 16	Glenkinchie: 10, 12	Tamnavulin: 12	Bruichladdich: 12 2nd ed	Laphroaig: 10, 15, Cask Strength
Benromach: Organic	Glen Moray: Classic, 12	Tormore: 12	Cardhu: 12	Tomintoul: w/a Peaty Tang	
Caol Ila: 12, 18	Lagavulin: 12	Ardbeg: 10	Glenlivet: 16 Nadurra		
<b>Tennessee Whiskey</b>	All: Straight and Blended				
<b>Tequila</b>	Approved: Silver – All		Requires Certification: Gold, Reposado, Añejo		
	Certified: Sauza**, Agave 99*, Don Camilo*, El Diamante del Cielo*, Fabrica de Tequilas Finos*, La Prima de Poncho*, Pancho Pistolas*, Santos*, Stallion*, Tinoch*, Tonalá*, Zapopan*				
<b>Vermouth</b>	Certified: Kedem (OU)				
<b>Vodka</b>	Approved: All Domestic, except Hangar 1, Lost Horizon, or those listing whey alcohol, wine alcohol, or flavored vodka				
	Certified: Flavored – Absolut*, Nemiroff*, Peisachovka**, Smirnoff**, Zachelwi**				
	Approved: Imported				
	Absolut*	Danzig Gold	Image Holding*	Prarie*	Vox-Regular
	Belvedere*	Finlandia-Regular	Imperial	Pravda*	Yevreyskaya
	Canadian Iceberg*	Forward	Kedem**	Stolichnaya*	Zachelwi**
Carmel*	Goldenbarr*	Ketel One-Regular	Stropkov**		
Chopin	Grey Goose-Regular	Lavel*	Svedka		

## CERTIFIED LIQUEURS & CORDIALS

Arak** Alouf, Extra Fine, Ashkelon Grapa, Zachelwi-Regular and Flavored	Disaronno**	Herman Jansen*	Peter Heering* Cherry	Starbucks* Coffee Liqueur (parve), White Chocolate (dairy)
Azmará** Coffee	Drambuie**	Imperian***	R. Jelinek* Slivovitz, Pear Williams	Taam Pree**
Bartenura Liqueurs**	Frangelico*	Infusion*	Sabra* Chocolate Orange, Coffee	Vinprom***
Binyamina**	Godiva* Cappuccino (dairy), Chocolate (pareve), Chocolate Cream (dairy), Vanilla (dairy), White Chocolate (dairy), White Chocolate Cream (dairy) [Dairy Godivas are cholov stam]	Leroux*	Silver Cloud**	Zachelwi**
Cointreau**		Peacock**	Spirit of Solomon**	

\*Certified only when bearing the OU \*\*Certified by other agencies when bearing *kashrus* symbol \*\*\*When bearing Star-K P

## POPULAR LIQUEURS - NOT RECOMMENDED

B & B Liqueur	Carolans	Galliano	Raki	Swiss Kirshwasser
Bailey's Irish Cream	Chambord	Grand Marnier	Sambuca	Southern Comfort
Benedictine	Chantreuse	Hiram Walker Liqueurs	Schlink Haus Kabinett	Tia Maria
Bols	Cristal AguaDriente	Midori	Sheridans	Yukon Jack
Campari	Dubonett	Ouzo	Stock from Italy	

We would like to thank Monsey Wine & Liquor and R' Elyahu Weinstein for their assistance in the preparation of this list.



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We would like to wish our *Kashrus*  
*Kurrents* readers around the world a

*K'siva*  
*V'Chasima*  
*Tova!*

## *Upcoming Star-K Program*

### **to Enhance Kashrus Awareness for Mashgichos**

By: Margie Pensak

Star-K's annual *Kashrus* Training Seminar has helped prepare men who are in pursuit of a professional career in kosher supervision, as well as those presently in the field who wish to fine-tune their skills. But now, say the women *mashgichos* who work for various *kashrus* agencies, the time has come for a similar albeit separate opportunity to enhance the skills they have been practicing in the field for decades.

To accommodate these *mashgichos*, STAR-K will hold a for-women-only program to enhance *kashrus* awareness scheduled for November 2-3 in the agency's Baltimore offices. The seminar will feature the following topics: determining acceptability of products; understanding the dynamics of *kashrus* in America; setting up a kosher kitchen; *shul* kitchen guidelines; effective vegetable checking for infestation; and challenges in the workplace, including establishing respect in the kitchen.

Drawing on the expertise of the world renowned Star-K staff, the program's sessions will be led by Star-K's Rabbinic Administrator, Rabbi Moshe Heinemann in addition to Star-K President, Dr. Avrom Pollak and STAR-K *Kashrus* Administrators. Field visits to a restaurant, bakery, and hotel will complete this unique experience.

For further information on the Star-K *Kashrus* Mashgicha *Kashrus* Enhancement Program, or to register, contact Rabbi Zvi Goldberg, (410) 484-4110, extension 219, or check our website: [www.star-k.org](http://www.star-k.org).

## **Appliance Alert:** *Freezers*

Before buying a freezer, be sure to determine that there is no door alarm or digital temperature display. More & more freezers have this technology. If you do purchase such a freezer, be certain that the alarm and displays can be deactivated, so that you can use the freezer on *Shabbos* & *YomTov*.



## **Star-K Kosher Certification**

A non-profit agency representing the Kosher consumer in promoting *Kashrus* through Education, Research and Supervision.

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