STAR-K KOSHER CERTIFICATION

ועד הכשרות דבאלטימאר

KASHRUS KURRENTS

FALL 5787 – 2026 | VOLUME 49 NO. 4



CAN YOU TOP THAT?

THE IKAR & TAFEL CONUNDRUM OF THE ACAI BOWL



RABBI TZVI ROSEN
STAR-K KASHRUS ADMINISTRATOR
EDITOR, KASHRUS KURRENTS

Tikkun means to fix or improve. Life in general and Yiddishkeit in particular is in a constant state of *tikkun*. One trying to improve his or her character traits is actively engaged in *tikkun hamidos*. Another involved in acts of chesed or working for a worthy cause is involved in *tikkun haolam*. The owner of a used car may find it in a constate state of *tikkun* at the mechanic's shop.

Improving or enhancing a mitzvah is no different. Chanuka is a good example. The baseline *kiyum hamitzvah*, the fulfillment of the mitzvah of lighting Chanukah *licht*, is one candle per night per household. Enhancing the mitzvah by each family member lighting his own single candle each night is known as *mehadrin*. Fulfilling the mitzvah to the ultimate, in which each member of the family lights his own menorah and adds *neiros* each successive night, is the prevalent custom. The ultimate practice is called *mehadrin min hamehadrin*.

Our nature is not to aim for the baseline – neither in choosing an esrog nor when purchasing a car. We aspire to grow, to aim for something higher. Who would purchase a baseline esrog? Or a car without air conditioning or power steering? Over time, the old baseline or standard becomes enhanced with new practices. Take the traditional Shabbos seudah of a challah, gefilte fish, cholent and kugel. Today's Shabbos meal might include an array of dips, teriyaki salmon, charcuterie boards and a sourdough loaf.

Nothing stays basic. The new constantly supplants the old. Even when a healthy snack is advertised as a back-to-basics treat, in the world of *brachos* it is anything but. Our new world of culinary creativity has been the passion of many a kosher recipe developer, but often when the disparate ingredients build to a culinary crescendo, we may find ourselves encountering a *brachos* conundrum. A great example of creativity meeting conundrum is the newly popular acai bowl.

A MINI REVIEW OF HILCHOS BRACHOS

Let's start with a short *brachos haminim* review. The Gemara raises a great question regarding enjoying Hashem's ample gifts in this world. On the one hand, Dovid Hamelech states that the earth and all that fills it belongs to G-d: *l'Hashem ha'aretz u'meloah* (Tehillim 24:1) But elsewhere, he writes: The heavens are Hashem's, but the earth He has given to man: *Hashamayim shamayim l'Hashem v'haaretz nosan livnei Adam* (Tehillim 16:115). The Gemara resolves the dilemma: *kan l'fnei habracha – kan l'achar habracha* (*Brachos* 35ab) The earth is Hashem's but when we make a bracha, we are given permission to partake from and enjoy His bounty.

Brachos come with specific rules with specific directives. Knowing what bracha category a fruit or vegetable falls into is key. A radish is a vegetable and thus the bracha is *Borei Pri Ha'adama*. A peach is a fruit growing on a tree, thus requiring *Borei Pri Ha'eitz*. A kiwi grows on a perennial vine, thus the bracha is also *Borei Pri Ha'eitz*. What about a banana? Is it a fruit or a vegetable? Since a banana stem dies after the banana is picked, it has the status of a vegetable and the bracha is *Borei Pri Ha'adama*.

A MINI REVIEW OF HILCHOS IKAR V'TAFEL

Life and *brachos* get more complicated when different foods with different *brachos* marry.

Halachically, components of a meal or dish that is made up of a combination of foods are viewed subjectively as either *ikar* (primary) or *tafel* (secondary). If they are of equal importance, they are *shoveh b'shoveh*. The Bais Yosef (*Hilchos Brachos* O.C. 204:7 and 212:1) outlines the basic priority of *brachos* when the item is a combination of multiple ingredients.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Aim Habanim Semeicha:

Happy Mommy, Happy Baby



RABBI MORDECHAI FRANKEL
DIRECTOR, STAR-K INSTITUTE OF HALACHA

One of the many miracles of childbirth is that a mother spontaneously begins to produce milk to feed her child. A newborn baby who is exclusively fed mother's milk will typically nurse 8 to 12 times a day and Shabbos is no different. Although a woman is allowed to nurse on Shabbos, there are some halachic restrictions when it comes to pumping and expressing milk stemming from the melacha of *dosh*.

The Melacha of Dosh

Dosh, or threshing, is one of the 39 forbidden *melachos* on Shabbos. Threshing involves the separation of edible grain from its inedible outer husk. Liquid that is absorbed in a solid food is conceptually similar to edible food stored within an inedible shell, and the act of squeezing a liquid from a solid is similar to the *melacha* of *dosh*. This is why one may not squeeze wine from grapes on Shabbos.

The Halachos of Expressing Milk on Shabbos

When nursing a baby, the mother separates a liquid from a solid, namely the milk from her body. For this reason, there are restrictions regarding how she can express or pump milk on Shabbos. She is allowed to express milk directly into her baby's mouth on Shabbos but not into an empty vessel. Doing so violates the *melacha* of *dosh*.

But what if she has extra milk that is causing her discomfort and her baby does not want to nurse? In that case, she should first pour a bit of talcum powder or liquid soap into a container and then express her milk directly into the container. This action is permitted because the presence of talcum powder renders the milk inedible.[1]

1 See *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim (S.A. O.C.)* 328:34-35 and 330:8 with *Mishna Berura (M.B.)*, and *Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchassa (S.S.K)*, 3rd edition, 36:21.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

1 Can You Top That? The Ikar and Tafel Conundrum of the Acai Bowl
1 Aim Habanim Semeicha: Happy Mommy, Happy Baby
2 Does Medicine Need Kosher Certification?
5 In Memoriam: AJ Levin | Margot Brilliant



Does Medicine Need Kosher Certification?

The STAR-K medicine lists have been fully updated for 2026-2027.
VISIT:
wstar-k.org/medicinelist
and
star-k.org/obgynlist



RABBI DOVID HEBER
STAR-K KASHRUS ADMINISTRATOR

One of the most common questions received by the STAR-K Hotline is, "Does medicine need to be kosher certified?" The reason people ask it is because the pharmaceutical industry is essentially the "last frontier" of kashrus. Whereas numerous food manufacturers have opted for kosher certification, with rare exceptions, the same cannot be said for pharmaceutical companies.

Since those who are ill require medication, what are their options? In lieu of formal certification, rabbonim and kashrus agencies must rely on ingredient panels to determine a medicine's kosher status and use those details to *pasken* whether one may or may not consume an item.

To help you better understand how to navigate the pharmacy, STAR-K has prepared the following *halachic* guidelines. These are based on the *psak* of Rav Moshe Heinemann *shlit"a*, STAR-K's Rabbinic Administrator.[1]

CATEGORIES OF ILLNESSES

Before determining whether a non-kosher product may be taken, one must first identify the category of illness. For purposes of our discussion, there are three categories of illness:

Choleh sheyeish bo sakana (one who is ill and whose life is or may be in danger). One who falls into this category may use any non-kosher medication if an equally effective kosher medicine is not readily available. This includes:

- One who has a heart condition, diabetes, substantially elevated blood pressure, kidney disease, lung disease, epilepsy, a compromised immune system (transplant anti-rejection), severe depression, is undergoing cancer treatment, or is a stroke victim.
- An elderly person who has the flu or an infant with a fever.
- A pregnant woman whose life is in danger (e.g., due to toxemia).
- A woman who has given birth in the past seven days (or longer if there are complications).
- One whose life is currently not in danger but if left untreated could develop a life-threatening complication.

All of the above is equally applicable on Pesach for one who requires medication that contains *chometz*.

Choleh she'ein bo sakana (one who is ill and whose life is not in danger). This includes:

- Anyone who is bedridden, is noticeably not functioning up to par due to pain or illness, or has a fever which is not potentially life-threatening.
- One who suffers from migraine headaches, has the flu, or has chronic or debilitating pain (e.g., arthritis).
- A child under the age of six who is experiencing discomfort.
- A pregnant woman with non-life-threatening symptoms.
- One who has given birth within the past thirty days. (This period may be extended in certain situations.)

Those listed above may take non-kosher medication *shelo k'derech achila*, in an uncommon manner of eating, if a kosher alternative is not readily available.[2]

Shelo k'derech achila includes swallowing items that are designed to be swallowed without chewing (i.e., caplets, swallow tablets, and even gelatin capsules);[3] poor tasting chewable tablets; poor tasting liquids; and tablets that dissolve under the tongue. Orally disintegrating tablets (ODT's) that melt on the top of one's tongue are considered *k'derech achila* and would require a *hechsher* or a review by a rav to determine its kosher status.

Taking non-kosher medication that requires eating in a normal manner (e.g., chewable tablets that taste good and contain gelatin or other non-kosher ingredients) is prohibited. Consult a rav in this scenario if the medication is needed.

One with a *mechush* (a slight discomfort) or who is a *bahree* (healthy individual).

One who has a *mechush* (e.g., slight joint pains or a runny nose) or is a *bahree* who takes vitamins and supplements to maintain good health should make every effort to ensure that the product is either kosher certified or contains all kosher ingredients.

If this is not possible, a rav should be consulted since in some instances non-kosher products taken *shelo k'derech achila* may be permissible.[4] Non-kosher medications that are consumed in a normal manner (e.g., chewable tablets that taste good and contain non-kosher ingredients) are prohibited.

PREVENTION

One who is healthy or has a slight discomfort, whose physician advises him that there is a high risk of his becoming a *choleh she'ein bo sakana*, may take non-kosher medicine or supplements *shelo k'derech achila*. Moreover, if his physician advises that there is a high risk of his becoming a *choleh sheyeish bo sakana*, he may take any medicine in any form, whether kosher or not, to avoid becoming a *choleh mesukan* (one with a life-threatening condition).

Similarly, if a doctor advises swallowing a specially formulated non-kosher vitamin for someone who has a high risk of developing macular degeneration or arthritis, one is permitted to do so. A healthy individual, however, who wishes to take non-kosher supplements to prevent an illness that is unlikely to occur should consult with a rav.

INGREDIENTS & TYPES OF MEDICATIONS

The following addresses the various *halachos* regarding specific medicinal products.

---

1 This article is not intended to advise consumers whether a specific product is effective. One should consult with his physician or health advisor regarding the effectiveness and side effects of each product and determine which products may be taken. Leniencies noted are often only for those who are ill unless otherwise indicated and are not meant for healthy individuals.

Furthermore, products certified by STAR-K do not rely on many of the leniencies noted in this article. This article only addresses year-round kashrus and is not relevant to Pesach. For Pesach information, refer to the STAR-K Pesach Guide that is published annually.

Ingredients in medications sold in the U.S. can be found on the NIH website, dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/. Ingredients in over-the-counter (OTC) products are listed on the label. Unlike ingredient panels on food, medication ingredients are typically listed alphabetically and not by percentage.

2 *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 155:3.

3 See *Minchas Shlomo* 17. A more "*mehudardik*" way of *shelo k'derech achila* is to place the gelatin capsule inside a kosher certified capsule (e.g., cellulose), which are readily available (see *Edus L'Yisroel*, p. 177).

4 See *Kovetz Teshuvos* 73 (Rav Elyashiv), who writes that poor tasting ingredients mixed into a tablet (e.g., that one swallows) make it *nifsal mei'achilas kelev* and thus permissible even for those who are healthy. However, see *Shach Y.D.* 155:13, based on the explanation of the *Chochmas Adam* (in *Binas Adam* 52) who seems to be *machmir*. For a further discussion of medication and kashrus, see *Mesorah* vol. 14, p. 90.

Tablets & Capsules

Gelatin, the primary ingredient in capsules, is an ingredient that is derived from animals. Some tablets also contain gelatin. Unless it is made under strict kosher conditions[5] (i.e., from kosher slaughtered animals or kosher fish), the product is not kosher. One can assume that capsules made from gelatin substitutes (e.g., vegetable-based or cellulose capsules) have a good *hechsher*.

As noted above, swallowing a gelatin capsule (or a tablet with gelatin) is considered *shelo k'derech achila* and may be taken by a sick person even if he is not in danger.[6]

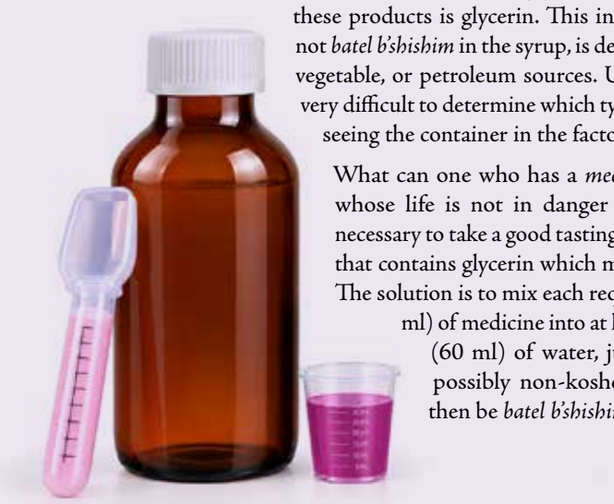
Most tablets contain magnesium stearate, calcium stearate or stearic acid. These inactive ingredients serve as lubricants that allow the medicinal powders to adequately "flow" through and "release from" the processing equipment. These ingredients may be derived from either animal or vegetable sources.

Under normal circumstances, however, one can assume that at least one of the following conditions is true: either the stearates are kosher or enough lubrication was provided using less than 1.6% stearates, which make them *batel b'shishim* and certainly permissible. Therefore, even one who has a *mechush* or who is in good health may take tablets if the only questionable ingredient is stearates.[7]

Many tablet coatings contain emulsifiers and plasticizers. For example, polysorbate 80 is made from oleic acid which is possibly derived from tallow. Triacetin is possibly derived from non-kosher glycerin.[8] However, these ingredients are often used together with a polymer to produce flexibility and elasticity in the coating. Because the coating is "inedible" based on the ingredients used and is like a piece of plastic, in the event these ingredients come from non-kosher sources, they would still be *batel b'rov* in the coating,[9] making the product allowable.

Syrups and Liquids

These products are considered *k'derech achila* because they taste good and are consumed in a normal manner. The most likely problematic ingredient in these products is glycerin. This ingredient, which is not *batel b'shishim* in the syrup, is derived from animal, vegetable, or petroleum sources. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to determine which type is used without seeing the container in the factory.



What can one who has a *mechush* or even one whose life is not in danger do if he finds it necessary to take a good tasting liquid medication that contains glycerin which may not be kosher? The solution is to mix each required teaspoon (5 ml) of medicine into at least 2 fluid ounces (60 ml) of water, juice or soda. The possibly non-kosher glycerin would then be *batel b'shishim*.[10]

Vitamins

Ideally, vitamins should only be taken when they are kosher certified. STAR-K and other kashrus agencies currently certify several vitamin companies, as listed in the STAR-K Over-the-Counter Medications listing.[11] Many kosher brands of vitamins are available throughout the U.S. – at local pharmacies, online, or through local multi-level marketers and distributors.

If a needed vitamin or nutritional supplement is not available with kosher certification, the following guidelines apply:

Multi-vitamins and prenatal vitamins may contain non-kosher ingredients that are not listed on the label. In particular, Vitamins A and E may be mixed with non-kosher gelatin.[12] A kosher vitamin brand is recommended. Under normal circumstances, one may not take non-certified chewable multi-vitamins.

Certain single vitamins (e.g., Vitamin B or C) or supplement tablets should ideally be certified with a *hechsher*. If it is determined that the components and inactive ingredients are kosher, the product may be taken without certification.

Gummy vitamins require certification as even gummies with all kosher ingredients are quite possibly produced on equipment that also processes non-kosher gelatin-based gummies.

Dairy

Various tablets and caplets contain lactose, a dairy ingredient which serves as a bulking agent.[13] In medicine, one can assume it is kosher. Many OB/GYN prescriptions for women often contain lactose and are dairy. One who eats meat should wait at least one hour before taking medicine that contains dairy ingredients.[14]

Probiotics

Ideally, these should be purchased with a *hechsher*. The main concern is that they are grown on non-kosher media. If someone requires probiotics without a *hechsher*, they can assume that even if there was non-kosher growth media, there is a *zeh v'zeh gorem*, meaning one can assume it was grown on both kosher and non-kosher media, making the active probiotic acceptable. The other ingredients in the finished product would still need to be verified. Probiotics that do not have a *hechsher* are often dairy as the growth media contains dairy (non-Cholov Yisroel). This is true even if the label states "dairy free." Unless one purchases probiotics with a reliable pareve hechsher, one should assume the product may be dairy.

Non-Oral Treatments

The following treatments are not typically ingested and thus have no kashrus concerns: injections, intravenous treatments (IVs), mineral oil, antiseptics, ear drops, Epsom salts, external creams, gels, oils, powders and lotions, ointments, nasal sprays, rubbing alcohol, shampoos, soaps, castor oil and enemas.

In the *zchus* of reviewing the laws of kashrus of medications, may those who are healthy continue to maintain good health and those who are ill have a *refuah shleima*. ☆

---

5 Although such gelatin is available, gelatin with a reliable kosher certification is rarely used, if ever, in the pharmaceutical industry. If the label states, "kosher gelatin" (on any item – even food products), do not use unless it has been reviewed and approved by your rav.

6 One who has a *mechush* or who is in good health should consult a rav. Opening the capsule and removing the "kosher" powder contents is sometimes an option, however, it is not always advisable, since removing the gelatin capsule may cause the product to lose its intended effect. A pharmacist or doctor should be consulted to determine if this method is advisable. A liquid inside a gelatin capsule may be rendered non-kosher based on the principle of *kavush k'mevushal*. Hence, squeezing out the "kosher" contents may not be a solution, as the contents may have been rendered non-kosher.

7 *Batel b'shishim* (a 1:60 ratio) is determined by volume (not by weight). This means the volume of kosher must be 60 times greater than non-kosher (see *Pischei Teshuva Y.D.* 98:2). Regarding flavors added, although food products with natural and artificial flavors must have a reliable *hechsher*, one can assume they are *batel* in a medication or vitamin. This is because the chances of a flavor used for medicine containing an intrinsically prohibited *davar she'avidi l'taama*, where we would say *afilu b'elef lo batel*, is highly unlikely. One can also assume any alcohol is kosher.

Regarding equipment, one need not be concerned (unless it is a gummy) that the ingredients used in a medication were produced on non-kosher equipment (see *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 122:6, *stam keilim ainum b'nei yoman*). These leniencies only apply to medicine without certification and not to food products that are not certified. Food products containing flavors or heated in plants with non-kosher ingredients require an approved kosher certification.

8 Polysorbate 80 and triacetin can also be drived from kosher sources.

9 Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky *zt"l* in *Emes l'Yaakov* (*Shulchan Aruch*, p. 307) was of the opinion that something non-kosher in an inedible form is *batel b'rov* because we do not say *taam k'ikker* if inedible.

10 Cough syrups and pain relievers contain a maximum of 20% glycerin (a 1:5 ratio). When 1 tsp. (5 ml) is mixed into at least 2 fl. oz. (60 ml, making a 1:12 ratio) of water, juice or soda, the glycerin becomes *batel b'shishim* (a 1:60 ratio). There is no issue of *ayn mevatlin issur l'chatchila* (i.e., under normal circumstances, one may not add 60 times kosher food to non-kosher food to nullify it) as one is permitted to be *mevatel* a *safek issur* (see *Shach Y.D.* 92:8) and the glycerin is not definitely non-kosher.

Furthermore, according to some opinions, a *choleh* may nullify an *issur d'rabanan* (i.e., the [possibly] non-kosher ingredient already mixed into the medicine is only an *issur d'rabanan*, as it is *chatzi shiur b'taaroves*; see *Teshuvas B'tzeil Hachochma* 5:39). There is no problem of *chaticha na'aseis neveila*, since a *choleh* has the status of a *befsed gadol* and the *Rama Y.D.* 92:4 says there is no *chaticha na'aseis neveila* in a case of *lach b'lach b'shaar issurim b'befsed gadol*.

11 See star-k.org/medicinelist.

12 This is done in a process called micro-encapsulation in which the vitamin component is spray-dried on a base of gelatin. In this case, the gelatin might not be listed on the label of the finished vitamin tablet. Vitamin D can also contain gelatin but in a multi-vitamin is likely to be *batel b'shishim*. (In a Vitamin D tablet, however, the gelatin might not be *batel*.)

13 If one keeps Cholov Yisroel and requires medicine containing lactose, a rav should be consulted. The possibility to be lenient is based on the following: lactose is made from whey, which is a by-product of cheese. There are *poskim* who permit the use of non-Cholov Yisroel cheese when the cow was milked to make cheese (see *Rama Y.D.* 115:2). One can assume lactose in tablets and caplets was derived from such milk.

14 See *Pischei Teshuva* 89:3.



CAN YOU TOP THAT?

THE IKAR & TAFEL CONUNDRUM OF THE ACAI BOWL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Common examples of *ikar* and *tafel* situations and the *brachos* that apply are shown in Fig. 1 below.

JORDAN ALMOND

Almond, hard sugary candy shell

IKAR Almond

TAFEL Candy shell, because it only sweetens the *ikar*.[1]

BRACHA *Borei Pri Ha'Eitz*



TWIZZLERS (LICORICE CANDY)

Sugar, corn syrup, flour, licorice extract

IKAR Sweeteners and licorice extract

TAFEL Flour, because its only purpose is as a binder.[2]

BRACHA *Shehakol*



VANILLA ICE CREAM SUNDAE WITH TOASTED ALMOND PIECES & CHOCOLATE SYRUP

Ice cream, almond pieces, syrup



IKAR Ice cream

TAFEL All the toppings, because these only enhance the *ikar*.[3]

BRACHA *Shehakol*

VANILLA ICE CREAM IN A SUGAR CONE

Ice cream, sugar cone

IKAR Both the ice cream and cone are *shoveh b'shoveh*

TAFEL Does not apply because both components are equally desired.[6]

BRACHA *Mezonos* on the cone & *Shehakol* on the ice cream



HERRING EATEN WITH AN EVERYTHING TAM TAM CRACKER

Herring, crackers



IKAR Both the herring and crackers are *shoveh b'shoveh*

TAFEL Does not apply because both components are equally desired.[4]

BRACHA *Mezonos* on the cracker and *Shehakol* on the herring



HERRING EATEN WITH PLAIN CRACKERS

Herring, crackers

IKAR Herring

TAFEL Crackers, because its main purpose is to offset the acidity of the herring.[5]

BRACHA *Shehakol*

1 O.C. 204:12 *be'er heiteiv* 19.
2 O.C. 204:12 *l'davek*.
3 O.C. 212:1 *(Rama)*.
4 O.C. 212:1.
5 O.C. 212:1 *(Rama)*.
6 Ibid.

Whenever there is an *ikar* and *tafel* situation, in essence the bracha on the *ikar* fulfills the bracha of the *tafel*. But what about a situation in which the *ikar* is actually rendered a *tafel*? Enter the acai bowl.

THE ACAI BOWL BRACHA CONUNDRUM

What is acai and why has acai gained such popularity? Acai is a small dark purple fruit. Its origin is the Amazon rainforest. Acai is known as a "super fruit" because it is packed with antioxidants, fiber and healthy fats. The acai palm tree is a perennial, so the bracha on an acai berry is *Borei Pri Ha'eitz*.

However, commercial acai is sold only as a puree and cannot be eaten plain. It requires the assist of other fruits to impart sweetness. In concocting an acai bowl, various fruits are blended with the acai puree and frozen to make a base, which may then be topped with bananas and an assortment of berries. Once additional garnishes – such as coconut flakes and granola – are scattered on top, and the entire concoction is drizzled with honey, Nutella or chocolate syrup, the acai bowl becomes a bracha labyrinth. (See Acai Bowl Recipe in the sidebar.)

If we break down the acai bowl into its halachic components, we arrive at some fascinating bracha insights.

Obviously, the main component of the acai bowl is its purple base, which normally would constitute the *ikar*. However, since other fruits and natural components are needed to flavor the acai, plus the fact that the entire base is completely pureed, Rav Moshe Heinemann *shlit"a paskens* that the bracha on the base is *Shehakol*. He considers the acai base as halachically comparable to chocolate, which requires the assistance of sugar to achieve its confectionary excellence. Other ingredients are also added to give chocolate its compelling flavor. Therefore, the bracha of chocolate is downgraded from *Borei Pri Ha'eitz* to *Shehakol*. The same holds true for the acai bowl.

Unlike chocolate, however, the acai bowl needs the addition of whole fruits and granola toppings to make it palatable. In this case, the whole fruit toppings (which are part of the *tafel*) augment the pureed fruit in the base (which technically make up part of the *ikar*). Thus, the *Borei Pri Ha'eitz* of blueberries and the *Borei Pri Ha'adama* of sliced banana and strawberries in the toppings *motzee* (fulfill) the *brachos* requirements of the acai base. Any granola, coconut flakes, drizzled honey or Nutella constitute minor enhancements, and thus do not require additional *brachos*, as these are true *tafel* components.

An acai bowl is a fascinating illustration of how a *tafel* (in our example, whole fruits) can fulfill the bracha requirement of an *ikar* (i.e., pureed fruits) and how, in turn, the *ikar* fulfills the requirements of the remaining toppings (i.e., the coconut, granola and honey). Who can top that!



ACAI BOWL RECIPE & ITS BRACHOS (SERVES 2)

ACAI BASE (IKAR): *technically Shehakol*

- 3/4 C **almond (or other) milk** (see note below)
- 1/2 C *plain* **yogurt** (or sub with more milk)
- 1 **banana**, frozen in chunks
- 1/2 C frozen **strawberries**
- 1/2 C frozen **blueberries**
- 2 (200 gm) packets of frozen *unsweetened* **acai berry puree,** broken into chunks
- 2 T **almond butter**
- Dash of **cinnamon**
- 1 tsp **vanilla extract** (optional)

TOPPING OPTIONS (TAFEL):

- Scoop of *plain* Greek **yogurt**
- Scoop of **granola**
- Sliced **bananas** *Ha'adama*
- Sliced **strawberries** *Ha'adama*
- Fresh whole **blueberries** *Ha'eitz*
- Chopped **walnuts** or slivered **almonds**
- Other fresh **fruits** (mango, apple), diced
- **Coconut** flakes
- Various **seeds** (chia, pumpkin, hemp)
- Drizzle of **nut butter** or **Nutella**
- Drizzle of **honey** or **maple syrup**

1. Start by adding milk and yogurt (if using) to a high-speed blender, then add the frozen fruit and other additions. Puree on low, using a tamper as needed to get the frozen items unstuck. Very slowly add more milk as needed till the consistency is thick and smooth but not liquidy. The thicker the base the better.
2. Assemble two bowls, starting with the base, then add any toppings you desire. (An acai bowl can be dairy or pareve.)
3. Make the appropriate *brachos* and enjoy! ☆



In Memoriam



With great sadness we mourn the passing of **Reb Avraham Yaakov Levin** *z"l*. In addition to playing an active role in the administration of STAR-K as a longtime vice-president of its forerunner, the Orthodox Jewish Council/Vaad Hakashrus of Baltimore (OJC/VHB), AJ (as he was fondly known) was the founding editor of *Kashrus Kurrents*.

From its inception 48 years ago – shortly before Pesach 5738 (1978) – *Kashrus Kurrents* has been an essential vehicle for promoting STAR-K's pioneering vision of kosher consumer awareness by presenting complex halachic concepts in a clear and engaging manner. In the very first issue, it advised the Baltimore community not to rely on labels or advertisements that merely stated, "Kosher for Passover." In that same issue, AJ launched the concept of a kosher hotline, giving the public access to reliable kashrus information and answers to their more pressing *shailos*. When we consider that these indispensable resources were implemented decades before the computer age, they are even more impressive. His accomplishments truly raised the bar for kashrus standards – then, locally; today, worldwide!

We also wish to express our sorrow over the passing of **Mrs. Margot Brilliant** *a"h*, who was the secretary of the OJC/VHB. Additionally, she played an essential role for decades mailing and distributing the *Kashrus Kurrents* when it was still being printed as a booklet in blue ink on yellow paper. We are most grateful for Mrs. Brilliant's years of unwavering devotion to STAR-K.

May the Levin and Brilliant families find *nechama* at this difficult time.

Rabbi Moshe Heinemann
STAR-K Rabbinic Administrator

Avrom Pollak
STAR-K President



Aim Habanim Semeicha:
Happy Mommy, Happy Baby

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Alternatively, she may use a mechanical nursing pump. An electric pump is also permitted provided she uses a Shabbos timer to turn the pump on and off. Regardless of whether she uses a mechanical or electric device, she should pump into a bottle into which talcum powder or something similar has already been added.

Preserving the Pumped Milk on Shabbos

Is it possible to pump without rendering the milk inedible? Under certain conditions, when using an electric pump, the answer is a qualified yes – due to the concept of *grama*.

As we know, it is forbidden to extinguish a fire on Shabbos unless it poses a potential threat to human life. One may not extinguish a fire merely to prevent monetary loss. One is allowed, however, to encircle fire with a ring of water, so that as the fire burns outward and reaches the water, the water eventually extinguishes the fire. This is permitted because placing water in the path of fire does not immediately extinguish the fire. That will only happen later, when the fire reaches the water.

An action that has no *immediate* consequence but will cause a *melacha* to occur after a delay is known as *grama*. *Grama* is permitted on Shabbos – though the Rema limits this leniency to cases of potential monetary loss.[2] The *poskim* interpret the Rema to allow *grama* whenever there are extenuating circumstances.[3]

In the 1950s, the Chazon Ish utilized the concept of *grama* when addressing the question of how religious dairy farmers in Israel could milk their cows on Shabbos. He wrote that it is considered *grama* to attach the pipes of a milking machine to the udders when the electricity is not functioning, and subsequently have the electricity turn on automatically in order to milk the animals.[4] Similarly, in the case of an electric nursing pump, Rav Moshe Heinemann *shlit"a* has *paskened* that a pump preprogrammed with a timer and positioned on the mother before it turns on is considered *grama*, and is permitted for a baby that needs milk.[5] (See sidebar discussing the newly STAR-K certified Zomee pump.)

So how does *grama* resolve the issue of allowing milk pumped on Shabbos to be stored and used? For that to happen, the following conditions must be met:

- The pump must be an electric device programmed to go on and off at set times using a timer.
- The pump must be positioned *before* the pump goes on.
- It may not be adjusted in any way the entire time the pump is on.
- The baby needs the milk.[6]

The *grama* exception does not apply if the baby has no need for the milk. In that case, the milk should be expressed into a container containing talcum powder.

Muktza Considerations

One remaining question is whether the expressed milk is *muktza*. The *poskim* tell us that milk produced by an animal on Shabbos is *muktza*. Is mother's milk analogous? Before answering, we must first understand why an animal's milk is *muktza*.

The *poskim* present three possible reasons as to why milk produced by a cow on Shabbos is *muktza*:

- Some consider the milk *muktza* because the cow itself is *muktza*.[7] This reason would not apply to human milk, as a nursing mother is not *muktza*.
- As mentioned, it is forbidden to squeeze liquid out of a fruit on Shabbos. *Chazal* extended the prohibition to include liquid which oozed out of fruit on Shabbos. This is known as the *gezeira* of *mashkin she'zavu*. According to some *poskim*, milk produced by a cow on Shabbos is included in this prohibition, causing the milk to be *muktza*.[8] However, it can be argued that *Chazal* would not extend this *gezeira* to mother's milk, as it is expected that a mother will nurse her baby and *Chazal* would not want her to feed the baby *muktza*.[9]
- There is also a rabbinic prohibition called *nolad*, which literally means "born." A classic example is an egg laid on Shabbos. Due to the fact that the egg did not exist outside of the chicken at the onset of Shabbos, *Chazal* categorized it as *muktza* for the duration of that Shabbos. According to some *poskim*, milk produced by a cow on Shabbos is considered *nolad*, rendering it *muktza*.[10]

Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv *zt"l* held that the *gezeiros* of both *mashkin she'zavu* and *nolad* do not apply to mother's milk. Therefore, none of the rationales for considering the milk of an animal as *muktza* apply to a human mother, and her milk is not *muktza*.[11] Rav Heinemann concurs with this viewpoint.

Halacha provides us with a path to navigate the challenges of *shemiras Shabbos* with modern technology and offers us solutions that give Hashem *nachas* and make both mommy and baby happy.

About the New STAR-K Certified Zomee Pump



The Zomee nursing pump recently received STAR-K certification. It can easily be programmed to turn on at set intervals throughout the day, and is approved for Shabbos use. To use it on Shabbos, follow these halachic guidelines:

Before Shabbos:

- Set the pumping duration and interval time.
- Plug the pump into the wall and activate the Sabbath Mode.

On Shabbos:

Before the pump turns on:

- Attach the collection cups to the body and secure in place. Ensure that they will remain in place without manual support.

During pumping:

- The cups should remain in place. They can be removed but cannot be reattached while the pump is active.
- If they shift during pumping and the milk flowing into the cups stops, they cannot be reattached.
- If they need to be attached or reattached in order to alleviate pain or discomfort, a bit of talcum powder or liquid soap should first be added to the cups so that the milk becomes inedible as it is collected. ☆

2 See *S.A. O.C.* 334:22 and *Biur Halacha s.v. 'degaram'.*
3 *Minchas Shlomo* (1:13) states that *grama* is permitted for any *tzorech gadol* such as for a *choleh*. See *Shulchan Aruch HaGraz, Kuntres Achron* 514:3, that *grama* is permitted *le'tzorech mitzvah.*
4 *Chazon Ish O.C.* 38:4.
5 Similarly, *Minchas Shlomo* (1:13) states that it is considered to be *grama* to insert a pin in a mechanical Shabbos clock so as to cause a light to turn off some time later on Shabbos. (See further *S.S.K.* 13:28.) See, however, the *psak* of Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv *zt"l* in *Ashrei Ha'ish O.C.* vol. 2, 26:3.
6 *Chazon Ish O.C.* 59:67 states that a lack of mother's milk is considered to be a *sakana* for the child even when there is other food available that the child will eat. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt"l* concurs, as quoted in *S.S.K.* 36:22, footnote 67.
7 *M.B.* 305:71 quoting *Magen Avrohom.*
8 *M.B.* ibid.
9 Heard from Rav Heinemann. *Tosefos* (*Beitza* 3a) and *Teshuvos R. Akiva Eiger* 1:5 also imply that the *gezeira* of *mashkin she'zavu* would not necessarily apply to mother's milk.
10 *Shulchan Aruch HaGraz O.C.* 305:22.
11 Rav Elyashiv, as quoted and explained by Rav Nissan Kaplan *shlit"a* in the Torah journal *Ohr HaShabbos*, no. 18 p. 25. See, however, *S.S.K.* 36:21.

NEW UNDER STAR-K

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS

Refer to letter of certification

AARTI DRUGS
India
INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS

ADITYA BIRLA SPECIALITY CHEMICALS
India
INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS

AGRO ZITEX
Tunisia
OLIVE OILS

AQUILA ORGANICS
India
FLAVOR CHEMICALS

AROMA ZACINI DOO
Serbia
VINEGARS

CEYLON ECO SPICES
Sri Lanka
SPICES & SEASONINGS

CHENGDU BAISHIXING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
China
AMINO ACID

CMG BIOTECH
India
HERBAL EXTRACTS

ECOSPICE INGREDIENTS
India
ESSENTIAL OILS & SEASONINGS

EMEISHAN HONGSEN BIOPHARMA
China
AMINO ACID

HANGZHOU HEALTHY PHARMATECH
China
AMINO ACID

HARBIN HADA STARCH
China
STARCHES & SWEETENERS

HARVEST SEASON FOOD
Cambodia
DRIED FRUIT

HEALTHIFE
China
HERBAL PRODUCTS

HENAN GUTAILANG FOODS
China
DRIED VEGETABLES

HVA FOODS
Sri Lanka
TEAS & SPICES

INNER MONGOLIA CONDEBOO BIOTECH
China
ADDITIVES

INNER MONGOLIA SUNSHINE TECHNOLOGY
China
FLAVOR CHEMICALS

KEGEL'S PRODUCE
Lancaster, PA
FRESH FRUIT & VEGETABLES

KLJ PETROPLAST
India
INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS

LENTEKS GIDA VE TARIM
Turkey
FLOUR & GRAIN PRODUCTS

LES HUILES D'OLIVES DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE
Morocco
OLIVE OILS

LIPIDYUM BITKI VE GIDA
Turkey
VEGETABLE/SEED OILS

MIANYANG SHENGSHI HEALTH TECHNOLOGY
China
AMINO ACID

NIGTAS
Turkey
FOOD CHEMICALS

NUTRITI INGREDIENTS
India
PROTEIN ALTERNATIVES

OSADA SEICHA
Japan
TEAS

PINGLUO SANHE FOOD
China
DEHYDRATED VEGETABLES

PROSPECTORS
Caledonia, MI
COFFEES

QINHUANGDAO TIANYUAN FOOD
China
CANNED VEGETABLES

QUAKER HOUGHTON BARCELONA
Spain
LUBRICANTS

ROCKMOUNT ENTERPRISES
India
FRUIT PUREE

SOCIETE AGRICOLE ET FROID TRADING
Tunisia
DRIED FRUIT

SHANDONG CHANGRUI FOODS
China
PICKLED PRODUCTS

SOLIVERA
Tunisia
OLIVE OILS

STERGIOUDIS OLIVES
Greece
OLIVES

TAI'AN SHENGHE BIOTECH
China
AMINO ACID

TANGSHAN LIANQING FOOD
China
CANNED & FROZEN FRUIT & VEGETABLES

TERRA NUTRACEUTICALS
Sri Lanka
COCONUT PRODUCTS

TOO SHENGTAI BIOTECH
Kazakhstan
AMINO ACID

UJALA LIFE SCIENCES
India
HERBAL EXTRACTS

VIJAYNAGAR BIOTECH
India
STARCHES & STARCH PRODUCTS

VORA SPICE MILLS
India
SPICES & SEASONINGS

XINJIANG HUIJIA BIOTECH
China
SWEETENERS

YANTAI KANGLEDA FOOD
China
CANNED FRUIT

CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Certified when bearing STAR-K symbol or product meets conditions in letter of certification

ADLAI PEARL
Sharon, MA
FLOUR & GRAIN PRODUCTS

AEVO NATURAL
Edison, NJ
VEGETABLE/SEED OILS

ALEA EVOLUTION
Italy
AMINO ACID

AROMA ZACINI DOO
Serbia
VINEGARS

BIRDLAND KOSHER GRILL
Baltimore, MD
CONCESSION STAND

CRUMB & CRUST
Baltimore, MD
BAKERY

MIEL MI CAMPITO
Dominican Republic
HONEY

GLOBAL FUTURA
Jericho, NY
OLIVE OILS

JEWISH JERKY BRAND
Baltimore, MD
JERKY SNACKS

KHELIFI EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
Tunisia
OLIVE OILS

LANCASTER KOSHER PIZZA
Lancaster, PA
RESTAURANT/TAKE OUT

LES HUILES D'OLIVES DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE
Morocco
OLIVE OILS

LOEW VINEYARDS
Mt. Airy, MD
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

MOCHI FOODS
Las Vegas, NV
BAKING MIXES

MUSHROOM SQUARED
Georgetown, NY
VEGETARIAN PRODUCTS

NEW YORK DELI & DINER AT UNIVERSITY OF BUFFALO
Buffalo, NY 14261
RESTAURANT/TAKE OUT

ONTRAY
Baltimore, MD
FRESH FRUIT

SHAMS BREWING
Los Angeles, CA
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

SOLIVERA
Tunisia
OLIVE OILS

THE JEWEL DATE COMPANY
Palm Desert, CA
DRIED FRUIT

VIZCAINO MARIO NESTOR
Argentina
DRIED FRUIT

KOSHER DAIRY NEW UNDER STAR-D

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS

Refer to letter of certification

SAINT FOODS
Mexico
DAIRY PRODUCTS

SS FINDIK TARIM SATIS
Turkey
NUTS AND SEEDS

CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Only when bearing STAR-D symbol

JAVA MOMMA
Danville, PA
COFFEE

CREATIVE COOKIE
Clifton Twp, PA
SPECIALTY COOKIES | DIPS & SEASONINGS

MCT DAIRIES
Appleton, WI
VEGAN CHEESE

STAR-K CERTIFICATION, INC.
122 Slade Avenue, Suite 300
Baltimore, Maryland 21208-4996

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
BALTIMORE, MD
PERMIT #1262



Never miss an important STAR-K update!

Now you can receive timely STAR-K updates directly on WhatsApp.

JOIN THE OFFICIAL STAR-K WHATSAPP COMMUNITY TO RECEIVE:

- KASHRUS ALERTS
- STAR-K ANNOUNCEMENTS
- APPLIANCE INFORMATION
- BUG CHECKING UPDATES
- KASHRUS KURRENTS & EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
- EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Join in less than a minute!
Choose only the channels that interest you, or choose them all!

bit.ly/4qUdDC0
The link to join is also available on the **star-k.org** home page

Have questions or need technical support?
Contact us at info@star-k.org

STAR-K KOSHER CERTIFICATION

A non-profit agency representing the kosher consumer in promoting kashrus through education, research and supervision

FOUNDING EDITOR
AJ Levin *z"l*

EDITOR
Rabbi Tzvi Rosen

MANAGING EDITOR
Mrs. Pesi Herskovitz

COPY EDITOR/
CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Ms. Adina Michelsohn

DESIGN
AMF Creative

Phone: 410.484.4110 | Fax: 410.653.9294 | info@star-k.org | www.star-k.org

**Download our STAR-K app on your Android and Apple Smartphones.
Available on the App Store and Google Play.**

**Receive late-breaking kashrus news and alerts in your email.
Send an email to alerts-subscribe@star-k.org or visit www.star-k.org/alerts**

This publication is dedicated to the memory of
Mr. and Mrs. M. Leo Storch
of blessed memory, through a grant from the Storch Family.

© 2026 STAR-K Certification, Inc. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced in any form without permission of STAR-K Certification, Inc.

STAR-K SABBATH MODE OVEN NOTICE

The Sabbath Mode feature on ovens does not permit cooking or reheating food on Shabbos.

Download the **STAR-K Guide to Using Ovens on Shabbos** at star-k.org/ovenguide or scan the QR code at the right.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

$10 (USD) annually - USA & Canada
$15 (USD) annually - Overseas

Please provide your mailing address with a tax-deductible check payable to Kashrus Kurrents, and mail to:

STAR-K Certification, Inc
122 Slade Avenue, Suite 300
Baltimore, MD 21208-3854

Kashrus Kurrents is also available online at **star-k.org/kashrus-kurrents**

To receive an email when the most recent issue has been uploaded, please send your request to **kashruskurrents-subscribe@star-k.org**.

(The STAR-K Passover Guide is not included in your subscription. It is available for purchase in Jewish bookstores after Purim.)