

Yoreh De'ah 87ff  
**Kashrut Supervision in the Synagogue**  
Rabbi Paul Drazen

**Introduction**

*This document was written for use by the rabbi who supervises a synagogue kitchen. As such, there are a number of areas which are left unresolved, as they are specifically in the domain of each congregation's rabbi to set religious policy for his/her congregation. If this guide is to be used in a congregation without a rabbi, the congregation should arrange for a rabbi to serve as its mara d'atra and turn to that rabbi for the decisions needed.*

Supervision of a synagogue kitchen need not be a burdensome chore if clear rules are established and there is a system to assure the rules are followed. The rabbi is responsible for providing information to those who cook and bake as well as guidance to those who supervise on-site during food preparation.

This document provides:

- a) Listings of areas for which the *mara d'atra* needs to make decisions for the observance of *kashrut* in the kitchen, with special consideration for the attendant issues of Shabbat and Yom Tov observance and preparation.
- b) Basic outlines and information on which decisions can be made, including relevant *teshuvot* of the CJLS.
- c) A suggested version of a document to be given to those who prepare food at the synagogue. Please note the sample document (Section III of this guide) was written intentionally **to leave decisions to be made** by each *mara d'atra*. It is not possible for any document to cover every aspect of each congregation's particular circumstances or customs. Section III of this document should be reviewed by the rabbi and then modified for use exclusively in her/his congregation.
- d) Lists of what information needs to be prepared for use in training and supervising those who will use the synagogue kitchen, be they lay volunteers, synagogue employees or professional caterers.

All who wish to use the kitchen must meet with the rabbi and designated synagogue staff member(s) (Executive Director, Kitchen manager, etc.) to review kitchen rules before being placed on the approved users list. At the meeting, the rules should be explained and those attending should have the opportunity to review the rules. Caterers and others should then sign a form acknowledging understanding of and agreement to follow the rules.

This document does not provide information on kashering the synagogue kitchen for *Pesah*.

## Section I

### Guidelines for Rabbis

### Supervision of Kashrut in Synagogue Kitchens

The rabbi of the congregation must prepare background information documents for those who use the kitchen. The rabbi's role as supervisor will be made easier by providing as much information as possible before work begins in the synagogue. As *mara d'atra*, each rabbi must determine practices in any area for which those using the kitchen will receive specific instructions (see Section III).

Chief among the areas to be determined are:

- A. Acceptable *hashgahot*: prepare list and include picture of accepted symbols.
- B. Acceptable local establishments or "local *hashgahot*." It is beyond the scope of this document to provide an exhaustive list of such organizations. Each *mara d'atra* must determine acceptability of an organization or food provider. Among issues to consider are:
  - a. What type of products are being prepared?
  - b. What ingredients does the group use?
  - c. What national *hashgahot* are considered acceptable?
  - d. What are their practices for Shabbat and Yom Tov?
  - e. What is the level of their supervision; try speaking with their *rav hamakhshir*.
- C. Ingredients accepted without *hashgahah* (such as flour and sugar). Prepare a comprehensive list.  
 (*The lists noted in points A, B and C should be dated, marked "subject to review and revision" and updated at least annually.*)
- D. Establish clear guidelines for heating foods and preparing coffee and tea on Shabbat.
- E. Determine acceptable levels of preparations for food, party set-up and meal pre-plating on Shabbat for a Saturday night party. Prepare a comprehensive list. Among areas which must be determined and specified in writing are:
  - May cold food be cut and plated?
  - May cold *hors d'oeuvres* be prepared?
  - May drink service be set up?
  - May tables be set?
  - May decorations be put up?
  - May a band or disc jockey set up?
 (*Many of the points in sections D and E have been dealt with in prior CJLS teshuvot. The teshuvot by Rabbis Kassel Abelson and Mayer Rabinowitz appear in section IV of this document.*)
- F. Appointment and training of designated persons to serve as *mashgihim* during food preparation and the actual event. Level of acceptable *hashgahah* for Shabbat food preparations as well as supervision of physical set-up on Shabbat must be determined.
- G. Determine if willing to allow storage of caterer-owned utensils; if so, how will it be done?
- H. Standards for kashering rented glassware, flatware and plates, if it is to be permitted.
- I. If and, if so when, wines without a *hekhsher* can be used.
- J. Use of hard liquors with or without a *hekhsher*.

Each rabbi should prepare and distribute information and requirements of the congregation to those who will use the kitchen. Copies of these materials should also be available in the kitchen at all times. Information on *kashrut* and the synagogue rules should be available in languages commonly spoken by kitchen workers in the region. The basic information required includes:

- Basic information on *kashrut*, such as *The Jewish Dietary Laws*, Dresner/Siegel, *The Jewish Dietary Laws: Sanctify Life*, Lebeau or the Kashrut CD all from the United Synagogue.
- A summary of rules for kitchen users. A suggested text follows (Section III).
- Form to indicate Caterer has read and pledged to fulfill the rules.
- List of acceptable *hekhsherim*, both national and local, which may be used in the synagogue without additional approval.
- Names of people authorized to serve as kitchen supervisors.
- List of times when Shabbat / holidays end. (A DOS-based computer program for calculating earliest ending times based on Klein is available from the author.)

## Section II

### Food Preparation Standards for Synagogue Kitchens

All food deliveries must be monitored. Each package must be checked for an acceptable *kashrut* marking or be on the list of items not requiring a *hekhsher*. Special note must be made to check for *parve*, dairy, meat, DE (*parve foods made on cleaned, but not kashered to parve, dairy equipment*) or ME (*parve foods made on cleaned, but not kashered to parve, meat equipment*) markings. These designations often change, even within brands, from shipment to shipment, and with size and style of packaging. *Kashrus Magazine*, *kashrut.com* or other sources for information on mismarked packages should be checked regularly.

If a product arrives with kosher designation on the factory sealed outer case but inadequately marked inner packaging, stickers with the rabbi's signature should be placed on the inside packages noting if the product is meat, dairy or *parve*.

If an accepted kosher caterer or bakery prepares food off synagogue premises to be brought to the synagogue in other than commercially sealed packaging, special arrangements must be made to facilitate the delivery. All such products must be packaged in containers with a way to guarantee the integrity of the product. The preferred method is to place printed labels over the opening, to assure that it has remained sealed since packaging.

Steam jacketed equipment is not recommended for use on Shabbat because the specialized systems make Shabbat operations very complicated.

For Synagogues with Two Kitchens (meat and dairy):

1. Dairy meals shall be made in the dairy kitchen; meat meals in the meat kitchen.
2. *Parve* foods are neither dairy nor meat *only until opened*. The remainder of food in an opened container follows the kitchen in which it is first used [For example: a *parve* mayonnaise is to be considered dairy if opened in the dairy kitchen.]
  - . If the kitchen has a specially designated *parve* section, *parve* food opened and used **only** there will remain *parve*.
3. Special care must be taken to assure supervision of *parve* foods. Because of possible contact with non-*parve* foods once served, *parve* foods are to be considered as meat or dairy, depending on the kind of meal served. [For example, *parve* cookies served at a dairy dessert buffet and returned to the kitchen for reuse are to be considered dairy.]
4. *Parve* food to be served with either a dairy or a meat meal may be prepared in either the dairy or meat kitchen (when no designated *parve* area exists) when:
  - a) No distinctly dairy or meat foods are present.
  - b) All equipment and surfaces have been thoroughly cleaned after the last distinctly dairy or meat foods have been made.
  - c) Surfaces where hot pots and pans rest or food is cut must have special covers when *parve* items are being prepared.
  - d) Any such *parve* made foods are to be packed in specially marked containers and sealed. The sealed packages may be moved to either kitchen for serving. Once opened when other foods are out, *parve* foods are then subject to rule 2, above.
5. Cabinets, sinks, utensils must be clearly marked. Markings should be safe and appropriate for use. (Nail polish, which chips off easily, is not appropriate for use in food preparation areas.)

6. Only the appropriate kitchen should be open during preparations. If both kitchens are open, a *mashgiaḥ t'midi* must be present. If only one kitchen is in use and the other is locked, supervision on occasional basis (*yotzei v'nikhnas*) is sufficient.
7. If a synagogue has a unique *parve* area, care must be taken so no distinctly meat or dairy foods are brought into it. As well, care must be taken to assure that the *parve* area does not become a passageway between the meat and dairy kitchens.

(For kitchens with one bussing / dishwashing area, see below.)

#### For synagogues with one kitchen:

1. Only one kind of meal - dairy or meat - is to be prepared at a time in any given work area. Set-up, plating and lay-out for presentation or serving are part of preparing the meal. If there is sufficient space in the kitchen, preparation of both meat and dairy meals may take place simultaneously in well separated areas, provided a *mashgiaḥ t'midi* is present. If only one kind of meal is being prepared, supervision on occasional basis (*yotzei v'nikhnas*) is sufficient.
2. *Parve* foods will be considered either dairy or meat when opened during preparation of that kind of meal (For example *parve* mayonnaise will be considered dairy if opened during preparation of dairy meals.). Once the *parve* status of an item has been changed, the container must be marked as to the current status of the formerly *parve* item.
3. Special care must be taken to assure the supervision of *parve* foods. Because of possible contact with non-*parve* foods once served, *parve* foods are to be considered as meat or dairy, depending on the kind of meal served. [For example, *parve* cookies served at a dairy dessert buffet and returned to the kitchen for reuse are considered dairy.]
4. *Parve* foods may be prepared when:
  - a) No distinctly dairy or meat foods are present.
  - b) All equipment and surfaces have been thoroughly cleaned after the last distinctly dairy or meat foods have been made.
  - c) Surfaces where hot pots and pans rest or food is cut have special covers when *parve* items are being prepared.
  - d) Foods are packed in specially marked containers and sealed.
 Once opened when other distinctly meat or dairy foods are out, the *parve* foods are then subject to rule 2, above.
5. Storage cabinets, sinks and utensils must be clearly marked. Utensils should be engraved, permanently tagged or painted (with non-toxic, heat resistant paint) to indicate type. Markings should be safe and appropriate for use. (Nail polish, which chips easily, is not appropriate for use in food preparation areas)
6. Only appropriate cabinets, pantries, storage areas, etc., should be open during preparations. Cabinets of the opposite meal-type must be locked.
7. Ovens may be used for only one kind (either meat or dairy) of food at a time. Ovens may be used for cooking meat or dairy food in sequence, after removing any visible food or crumbs, and wiping up any spills. Preference is to cook items tightly sealed (when possible), even when cooking in sequence. Stove-tops must be thoroughly cleaned by washing with appropriate surface cleaners before switching meal types. Grills and griddles are to be

designated *either* meat or dairy and should be left covered when food of the opposite type is being prepared.

8. Preparation areas: Stainless steel and other similar preparation surfaces are to be cleaned between uses by wiping down with appropriate cleaners. Surfaces may be used uncovered only for one type of food; the surface is to be covered when any other type of food is being prepared. Before a hot pan is placed on a preparation surface, the surface must be covered with the correct (either dairy or meat) hot pads. Porous surfaces, such as butcher block, are to be considered either meat, dairy or *parve* only, and kept covered when food of any other type is being prepared.
9. Dishwashers:
  - A) *Commercial dishwashers*: A single dishwasher may be used sequentially (without intervening cycles) for meat, dairy and *parve*, provided that standing wash water and rinse water are drained and food-catching filters are cleaned between meal-types. The same detergent/rinse may be used for all types of food without requiring separate containers for each. If stainless steel or coated-wire dish carriers are used, separate dish carriers are not required. If plastic dish carriers are used, separate dish carriers for meat and dairy are recommended, but not required.
  - B) *"Home-style" dishwashers*: Preference is to have two such dishwashers, one for meat and one for dairy. *Parve* utensils may be washed in either type machine after an empty wash cycle with soap and heated dry cycle, provided that only *parve* utensils are in the machine at the time. If there is only one dishwasher, meat, dairy and *parve* utensils may be washed sequentially, provided there has been an empty wash cycle with soap and heated dry cycle between types of utensils and there are no utensils of other types in the machine at the same time. Cleaning of any residuals from the dishwasher should occur before the "empty" wash cycle. Separate dish-trays are not required.
10. Mixers:
  - A) *Floor mixers*: have separate bowls and utensils for each type of food, marked clearly. The mixer body should be thoroughly cleaned between meal types.
  - B) *Counter-top mixers*: although one could do the same for counter-top mixers, because there is only a slight incremental cost to purchase an entire mixer rather than a complete set of bowls and mixers, purchase separate mixers for each type.
11. Coolers/freezers: all foods must be sealed and clearly marked as to type. It is best to designate specific shelves for meat, dairy or *parve* use. All spills are to be cleaned immediately.

## Kashering of Utensils

We **do not recommend** kashering of caterers' cooking utensils. Although many utensils can be kashered, it is difficult to manage from a practical standpoint due to:

- a. the complex nature of much of the equipment,
- b. the difficulty in explaining why some items can be kashered and others cannot and,
- c. the inherent difficulty of recognizing which items have been kashered and which may have been brought in without proper processing.

Note that catering tools are notoriously greasy and nicked from use. Therefore, greater care is needed to kasher them than gently-used home equipment. Kashering may be done only after a thorough soaking and cleaning in de-greasing solutions has been completed. Once the soaking and

cleaning is complete, a full day should pass before beginning the kashering process. Should kashering of caterers' utensils in the synagogue kitchen be made an option, we suggest the following:

**Glass plates, serving dishes, drinking glasses and baking dishes:**

*Glass baking dishes* and *pots* cannot be kashered.

*Glass items which do not get heated* (used at less than 120 degrees): These items must be thoroughly cleaned before kashering. Take special care with any designs engraved in the bottoms of plates: be sure all crevices have been brush-cleaned and each item individually inspected. Run through dishwasher **after** the hand-cleaning is complete.

*Pyrex* and *Corningware* are considered the same as glass.

**Metal Utensils:**

*Metal baking pans* cannot be kashered.

*Pots used for stovetop cooking*: thoroughly scrub, degrease and clean. If the utensil has a removable handle(s), the handle should be removed, cleaned and kashered separately. Items should not be used for a period of at least 24 hours after cleaning. Then they should be completely immersed in boiling water. Pots too large to be immersed should be filled to the top with water and the water brought to a boil so the water flows over the edge of the pot.

*One-piece flatware*: kashered as above.

*Two-piece flatware* (items with handles and the "food side" glued into the handle): [Be sure to alert owner that the utensils may be damaged in boiling.] *Non-porous handles* (such as metal or plastic): hand clean all crevices with a wire brush; kasher as above. If the handles can be detached, they should be removed, cleaned and kashered. *Porous handles* (such as wood) should be considered non-kasherable.

*Utensils used directly in flame* (spit, broiler) after thorough scrubbing and cleansing are heated to glowing, if possible, using the same heat source as used for cooking or a blow torch. When using a blow torch, caution should be used. An appropriate fire extinguisher should be nearby; anyone using the blow torch should know how to use the fire extinguisher properly.

*Permanent grills and griddles*: may be kashered by cleaning and heating to a temperature hot enough to ignite paper (e.g., a paper straw) on contact.

*Cooking knives*: We do not recommend trying to kasher two-piece knives with permanently attached handles. If non-porous handles can be detached, they should be removed, cleaned and kashered. *Porous handles* (such as wood) should be considered non-kasherable.

**Slicers:**

Completely disassemble all removable parts; soak in de-greasers. Non-removable, non-soakable parts should be cleaned with appropriate cleansers. The blade should be removed from the turntable and set aside. A stainless steel turntable should be washed and boiling water poured over it; a porcelain turntable should be washed and covered with a permanent covering or epoxy paint. The blade should be soaked in de-greaser, washed thoroughly in very hot water and pour boiling water poured over it. After replacing the blade on the turntable, run blade sharpening twice.

**Section III**  
(Sample form)  
**Rules for Use of Synagogue Kitchen**  
**Exclusively for Use in Congregation \_\_\_\_\_**

*Violation of these rules will result in loss of use of synagogue facilities.*

The synagogue understands that the caterer's chef, sous chef, pantry staff and/or others preparing food have a basic knowledge and appreciation of the rules of *kashrut* (Jewish dietary laws). The synagogue will provide printed materials and Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_ will answer questions to assure those preparing and serving food have been provided with a basic knowledge of the rules of *kashrut*. If information is needed in languages other than English, please contact Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_.

**General Rules:**

1. The *complete menu* for the meal must be presented for rabbinic approval **no less than three weeks** before the event. All food and beverages to be served or made available to guests, including *hors d'oeuvres*, alcoholic and soft drinks must be specified.
2. A *complete ingredient list*, including specific brand names, sources of all food products to be used (including size of packages to be used) must be presented to the rabbi or rabbi's designate **no less than two weeks before the event**.
3. Ingredients and/or products used must be made under kosher supervision considered acceptable by Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_. Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_ will provide a list of acceptable kosher supervising agencies and their kosher symbols. Products with any other kosher marking must be approved by Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_. (Users should recognize that each rabbi might have different standards for product acceptability. One may not assume that because Rabbi A allows use of a product, Rabbi R will also.)
4. No equipment or utensils (new or used, including but not limited to: dishes, plates, flatware, drinkware, pots, pans or service items) may be brought to the synagogue for use without explicit prior permission of Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_. Any item permitted may be subject to being made kosher under the supervision of Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_. The synagogue will not be liable for loss of or damage to items during the *kashering* process. Persons who use the kitchens may purchase specialized equipment for use in the synagogue and store it on synagogue premises for later use, with prior permission.
5. All food preparation is to be done under the supervision of Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_ or the rabbi's designate. Food delivery, preparation (even set-up for prep work), equipment delivery or use shall not take place until appropriate supervision is arranged and in place.
6. Food products made in private homes may **not** be served at any meal or function at the synagogue.
7. If an accepted kosher caterer or bakery prepares food off synagogue premises to be served, Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_ will outline rules for certifying the *kashrut* during the transport and delivery of the product.



8. Deliveries of food products to be used on Shabbat (or holiday) must be made no later than 3:00 Friday afternoon (or the afternoon before the holiday). Deliveries must take place under the supervision of Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_ or the rabbi's designate. A list of products being delivered must accompany the delivery. Any product or foods not previously approved or delivered without proper kashrut symbols will be refused if not meeting appropriate standards. Deliveries after 3:00 p.m. Friday (or afternoon before the holiday) will be refused.
9. Persons using the kitchen may not bring personal meals, snacks or utensils (even travel mugs, etc.) into the Synagogue.

**Special considerations for issues of "meat" and "dairy" foods:**

1. Meals may be either "dairy" or "meat" and must be consistent for the entire meal; *parve* foods may be served with either type of meal. All food and drink served before, during or after the formal meal (including *hors d'oeuvres* and sweet table) are considered part of the meal and must be meat or dairy (corresponding to the remainder of the meal) or *parve*.
2. Products marked "non-dairy" by government standards may still be considered dairy under the rules of *kashrut*. Artificial creamers and dessert toppings must be marked *parve*, as a "non-dairy" government designation alone is not adequate to assure that a food product is *parve*. Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_ will make the final determination of what items marked "non-dairy" may be served with a meat meal.
3. Products marked "DE" may be served before or following a meat meal, but not together with meat foods. Products marked "ME" may be served before or following a dairy meal, but not together with dairy foods.
4. "Cream drinks" may not be served before, during or after a meat meal unless the product is designated *parve* by an accepted kashrut agency.

**Specifically for meals to be served on Shabbat (Friday night, Saturday through sunset):**

1. All cooking for a meal to be served on Shabbat must be completed before Shabbat begins. Raw meats and fowl must be cooked enough to be served as "rare" before Shabbat begins.
2. Nothing may be taken out of the synagogue until after Shabbat is over. (This time varies from week to week. Check with the synagogue office for the exact time.)
3. Cooked solid foods, not in gravy or liquid, may be warmed in ovens to serving temperature on Shabbat. Stoves are to be turned on and set to appropriate temperature before Shabbat begins and left on, without adjustment, until Shabbat is over.
4. Cooked liquid foods (such as soup, *au jus* or gravies) may be left warm (below simmer or boiling) on griddle or special range-top cover (*blech*). Adjusting the temperature of a stovetop is prohibited. Gravies and *au jus* kept warm in this manner may be poured over heated meat before serving.
5. Water boiled before *Shabbat* may be left on the covered stove or griddle to maintain its heat on Shabbat, but it may not be boiled; that is, it must remain below 180 degrees. Adjusting the temperature of the stovetop or griddle is prohibited. Water may be heated to serving temperature before Shabbat and held in specially designated urns.
6. Coffee must be prepared before Shabbat and may be left in urns or in pots on a covered stove top or griddle for serving on Shabbat. Coffee and/or tea concentrates, purchased or

made before Shabbat, may be diluted with heated water from the urns or pots by putting the concentrate in the serving container and then adding the heated water. Coffee or tea may be made from bags or instant in the same manner. The heat under urns must be left on throughout Shabbat. The urns may be refilled from the pots of warm water (above, point 5).

**Specifically for Saturday Evening Events**

1. Delivery of all items to be used must be made either before 3:00 on Friday afternoon (or afternoon before the holiday) or after Shabbat (or holiday) is over. (This time varies from week to week. Check with the synagogue office for the exact time.)
2. Food that will be served after Shabbat may not be cooked or reheated until Shabbat is over. (This time varies from week to week. Check with the synagogue office for the exact time.) It is suggested that food to be served after Shabbat be prepared on Friday afternoon (or afternoon before the holiday) before 3:00 and held for finishing and reheating after Shabbat.
3. Other preparations, such as table setting or cold food set-ups, may be attended to by non-Jews, subject to guidelines set by Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_.

## Section IV Relevant Teshuvot of the CJLS

### Preparing and Serving Food on Shabbat

Rabbi Kassel Abelson

This paper was adopted as the Majority Opinion on November 4, 1981 by a vote of 6-3-7.

Members voting in favor: Rabbis Kassel Abelson, Edward M. Gershfield, David Graubart, David H. Lincoln, David Novak and Henry A. Sosland.

Members voting in opposition: Rabbis David M. Feldman, Mayer E. Rabinowitz and Joel Roth.

Members abstaining: Rabbis Jacob Agus, Ben Zion Bokser, Robert Gordis, Salamon Faber, Wolfe Kelman, Morris M. Shapiro and Harry Z. Sky.

Note: "Preparation and Serving of Food on Shabbat in the Synagogue," a paper by Rabbi Mayer E. Rabinowitz, was adopted as a Minority Opinion on November 4, 1981 by a vote of 3-6-7. It appears following this paper.

The synagogue is the focal point for the Jewish life of its congregants. Life cycle ceremonies commonly take place in the synagogue. The seudat mitzvah which follows should also be held in the synagogue, and not in a non-kosher hotel or restaurant where non-observance of dietary laws and open hillul Shabbat are common. Hence, every effort must be made to encourage families to hold their seudot mitzvah in the synagogue. When such events are scheduled for Shabbat or Saturday night, questions arise about the possible violation of Sabbath laws and standards in the course of the preparation and serving of the meal. These questions should be resolved in ways that do not put onerous burdens on families who bring such events to the synagogue. We should not hesitate to utilize the methods developed by past generations to mitigate the too rigorous application of the Sabbath laws, and to develop new and creative responses, in the spirit of Masorti Judaism, which will preserve and enhance the spirit of Shabbat. In this spirit, it is recommended that the following standards be observed by synagogue catering committees and by professional caterers.

#### MEALS ON SHABBAT

- (1) All deliveries to the synagogue must be completed by 3:00 P.M. on Friday. Nothing can be removed until Shabbat is over.
- (2) All cooking for a meal to be served on Shabbat must be completed before Shabbat begins.
- (3) Cooked solid foods may be warmed up on Shabbat -- ein bishul ahar bishul (cooked foods cannot be 'cooked' again) -- and mitztamek vera lo (the quality of reheated food suffers).
- (4) Refrigerated liquid foods which have been cooked before Shabbat may be reheated, but not boiled. To avoid boiling, one may place the pot on a burner covered by a tin plate (blech). Alternatively, a non-Jew may set the burner control to simmer and place the pot on the burner.
- (5) Coffee or water for tea should be prepared in thermostatically controlled urns prior to Shabbat. The urns should be left hot (overnight) until the coffee or water is used. There should be enough capacity in the urns to meet all needs on Shabbat. However, if it is anticipated that demand will outrun supply, then additional water may be boiled before Shabbat and left standing at room temperature. The water should be added gradually, before the urns empty, so that the boiling process does not begin again. The water storage containers should be labeled to avoid error. A non-Jew may refill the urns when necessary, on the assumption that (s)he will drink a cup of tea or coffee. Where possible, automatic devices are preferable.
- (6) Frozen foods which are cooked before freezing may be thawed and warmed. Frozen foods which require cooking before being eaten may not be cooked on Shabbat.
- (7) If the stoves do not have automatic controls, non-Jewish kitchen help should be informed before Shabbat that among their duties is the responsibility to see that the stoves are lit and the controls set to the proper temperature. (It is dangerous and wasteful of energy to leave stoves and ovens on for 24 hours.)
- (8) Cans may be opened on Shabbat, but only for use on Shabbat (Orah Hayyim 314:6).
- (9) Tables may be set, and dishes cleared and washed.

#### SATURDAY NIGHT MEALS

- (1) All deliveries must be made by 3:00 P.M. on Friday, or after Shabbat officially ends. (According to Rabbi Isaac Klein, the minimum period one should wait after the astronomical sunset before terminating the Shabbat, on the longest Shabbat of the year, is 25 minutes (i.e., 43 minutes after the time the candles were lit on Friday). The time will vary

slightly depending on time of year and longitude. [See Isaac Klein, A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1979), p. 57-8.]

(2) Caterers should not begin to cook, nor guests arrive, before the end of Shabbat.

(3) It is preferable to have food cooked or partially cooked before Shabbat begins, and then reheated or finished after sunset. Where the menu calls for newly prepared food, cooking cannot begin until Shabbat ends.

(4) Since non-Jewish employees can be assigned specific duties to be performed on Shabbat, as part of their total job responsibilities (See Klein, 91; Orah Hayyim 244:5; 252:2), they should be told before Shabbat to clean up, sweep, set tables, etc. However, these duties should not be performed "publicly" but after morning services when the congregation has left, or behind closed doors.

## **Preparation and Serving Food on Shabbat in the Synagogue**

Rabbi Mayer Rabinowitz

This paper was adopted as a Minority Opinion on November 4, 1981 by a vote of 3 in favor, 6 opposed and 7 abstentions.

Members voting in favor: Rabbis David M. Feldman, Mayer E. Rabinowitz and Joel Roth.

Members voting in opposition: Rabbis Kassel Abelson, Edward M. Gershfield, David Graubart, David H. Lincoln, David Novak and Henry A. Sosland.

Members abstaining: Rabbis Jacob Agus, Ben Zion Bokser, Robert Gordis, Salamon Faber, Wolfe Kelman, Morris M. Shapiro and Harry Z. Sky.

Note: "Preparing and Serving Food on Shabbat," a paper by Rabbi Kassel Abelson, was adopted as the Majority Opinion on November 4, 1981 by a vote of 6-3-7. It appears preceding this paper.

Many questions have been directed to the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards concerning the preparation and serving of food on Shabbat in the synagogue, the physical preparations necessary for catered affairs that take place on motzei Shabbat, what caterers may or may not do for affairs on Shabbat and motzei Shabbat, the hiring of non-Jews to work on Shabbat, etc. This paper will not attempt to be a comprehensive treatment of Shabbat observances in the synagogue or for that matter at home. It will try to deal with some of the specific questions raised concerning the above issues. General principles and values concerning these questions will be discussed. However, the purpose of the paper is not to give a series of specific answers, but rather an overall approach to the problem.

In its celebrated responsum on the Sabbath, the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards constantly reiterated that the decisions were made as part of a program of revitalization of the Sabbath "The preservation of the Sabbath spirit and of Sabbath practices is an indispensable element in any program for the Jewish future." Rabbi Isaac Klein quotes many opinions concerning *issur melakhah* on Shabbat and its place in understanding the significance of Shabbat. Without any doubt, the desired outcome of the responsum on the Sabbath, namely the revitalization of Shabbat observances, was overshadowed and lost. Rather than increasing the observance of Shabbat among our congregants, the responsum led to further weakening of Shabbat observances. What was accepted and remembered were the heterim -- and not the overall program. The justification for the heterim was that by bringing the people to the synagogue we would be able to teach them how to live as Jews, since the synagogue is the educational vehicle for teaching observance of mitzvot.

To this end the synagogue must adopt a maximalist approach in its observances, so that it can serve as a model for our congregants. An example of this approach is the area of *kashrut*. What may be acceptable at home or at a restaurant is not acceptable in the synagogue. For example, food must have a *hekhsher* in order for it to be brought into the synagogue.

Food cooked at home is not permitted in the synagogue in order to maintain a maximalist approach for observances in the synagogue. This approach should be extended to the questions concerning catering and serving of food in the synagogue on Shabbat and motzei Shabbat. The following principles should serve as the guidelines to what should be permitted.

### **Prohibited Activity in Making Preparations on Shabbat or Yom Tov for the Weekday**

In order to maintain the primacy of Shabbat, all preparations and/or work for functions that will take place after Shabbat should be prohibited on Shabbat itself. This would include, for example, the setting up of tables, arranging of flowers, accepting deliveries, warming of food, cleaning of rooms, cutting salad, etc. Obviously, anything that would entail violating a *melakhah* is prohibited, just as the product prepared in such a way would be prohibited on Shabbat itself. If we wish to utilize the opportunity to educate our people how to observe Shabbat and how important Shabbat is within the framework of Judaism, it would be counter-productive to permit activities on Shabbat whose sole purpose is to prepare for functions that will take place on motzei Shabbat. The only message we would get across by permitting this activity to take place is that Shabbat is not as important as the catered affairs that take place on motzei Shabbat.

The United Synagogue has established guidelines which require all preparations by a caterer to be completed by Friday, 3:00 P.M., and nothing may be removed until after Shabbat! This applies to affairs that take place on Shabbat; how much the more so should it be the practice for affairs taking place after Shabbat. If our laity has taken a stand

prohibiting preparation on Shabbat, it would be a hillul Hashem for the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards to permit such practices.

In order to made it clear both to caterers and to the people using their services, it should be stated unequivocally that no affair is to start (that is to say -- no one may arrive or use the facilities) until after Shabbat is over.

Caterers and their workers should not be permitted to enter the synagogue premises until after Shabbat so that the Ma'ariv service will not be disturbed, nor should people arrive early before Shabbat has ended. Many synagogues require this and they have not lost business.

#### Avoiding Work Which Is Not in the Spirit of Shabbat

Anything that either looks like one of the prohibited melakhot, or may lead to acts that constitute a major desecration of Shabbat, or that requires effort should be prohibited because it is not in the spirit of Shabbat. Once again we have a wonderful opportunity to instruct our congregants about Shabbat and the spirit of Shabbat. While it is possible in many areas to permit certain actions by using legalisms, it seems to me that our Committee on Jewish Law and Standards should emphasize that the "standard," i.e., the spirit of the law, is as important as, if not greater than the law itself.

Therefore, for example, even without the concept of issur hakhanah miShabbat lehol, we should prohibit the setting up of tables, chairs, dishes, trays, etc. for motzei Shabbat affairs because of the violation of the spirit of Shabbat. Shabbat should not become a day used to prepare for motzei Shabbat. Without the concept of shevut, there can be no Shabbat. While it is true that the reasons for some gezerot and the nature of uvdin dehol have changed, nevertheless, when it comes to practices permitted or prohibited in the synagogue on Shabbat, we should be very careful to maintain the concept of uvdin dehol, and prohibit those activities that are in violation of the spirit of Shabbat.

#### Prohibition Against Cooking and/or Boiling of Water

Any food (including water for tea or coffee) which is to be used on Shabbat in the synagogue should be cooked and/or boiled prior to Shabbat. Therefore, when using either electric or gas urns, the water should be boiled prior to Shabbat. Unboiled water may not be added to the urns once Shabbat begins.

An electric urn that is controlled by a thermostat may be used on Shabbat, provided that the water is boiled prior to Shabbat and that unboiled water is not added to it. If additional water is necessary, then a pot of water should be boiled before Shabbat and either kept on a stove covered with a tin plate (blech), or left on the countertop during Shabbat.

When needed, it can be poured into the urn, provided that the water will not reach the boiling stage.

These urns should not be turned off Friday night and turned on by a non-Jew on Shabbat morning, because the turning off of the urn will cause the thermostat to start anew and bring the water to a boil before Shutting off. This, of course, is prohibited.

No frozen food that requires cooking for it to be eaten can be heated and used on Shabbat. For example, frozen blintzes which must be baked or fried to be eaten cannot be used. Likewise, frozen vegetables which must be cooked in boiling water cannot be used. However, foods which have been completely cooked and then frozen - and can be eaten when thawed - can be heated on Shabbat using a tin plate (blech) on a stove lit before Shabbat. One must differentiate between liquids and solids, and be careful not to bring the food to a boil. The general rule we should follow in the synagogue is that we should not do anything there that we prohibit at home. The maximalist approach should be followed in order to emphasize the spirit and uniqueness of Shabbat, so that it can be a learning experience for our congregants.

#### Amirah Legoy Asurah Mishum Shevut

In order to instruct our congregants in regard to how to observe Shabbat, it is incumbent upon us not to have non-Jews perform acts on Shabbat that are prohibited to Jews. If standards are to mean anything, and if the spirit of the law is important, then the use of a "Shabbes goy" should be prohibited. To claim that we can have non-Jews cook on Shabbat and that Jews may partake of this food because the non-Jew is doing it for himself is a sham. It is obvious that the food was prepared for Jews since catered affairs do not take place in the synagogue on Shabbat except for Jewish customers. To permit something in the synagogue that we would not permit or do at home would certainly not be the maximalist Position the synagogue should strive for, nor would it help teach our congregants the importance of Shabbat observances.

The use of a non-Jewish caretaker to perform tasks which could be done by automatic devices should be discouraged. Even though a non-Jew can be assigned specific duties on Shabbat as part of his responsibilities, we should prohibit any and all duties that either are done publicly or are obviously done for the sake of Jews.

#### SUMMARY

In order to enable us to use the synagogue as an educational means to teach the importance of Shabbat and its observances, we should adopt the following guidelines:

- (1) The synagogue should follow a maximalist posture concerning observances.
- (2) We should be guided by the spirit of the law, as well as by the letter of the law.
- (3) No preparations may be done on Shabbat for activities that will take place after Shabbat.
- (4) Strict guidelines concerning the opening of the synagogue on motzei Shabbat for caterers and guests should be set (1/2 to 1 hour minimum) and enforced.
- (5) Cooking and/or boiling of water on Shabbat is prohibited.
- (6) The use of non-Jews should be avoided except in cases of emergencies or illness. Automatic devices should be used whenever possible and stoves should be lit before Shabbat and left on until motzei Shabbat.

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### **Other Kashrut related teshuvot (From the CJLS Summary Index: section 7)**

**WINE (STAM YAENAM)** 1. Any wine produced through the use of automatic machinery in plants operated by large, well-known wine companies is permitted, since no human being touches the wine during production. However, Israeli wine should be used whenever possible, especially for ritual purposes. Also, during Pesah, only wine which has been supervised by a competent rabbinic authority should be used, as the production of wine in America raises many questions involving leaven.

(Teshuvah by Rabbi Israel Silverman, 1964)

2. Because of the use of dairy or non-kosher substances as fining agents in wine, it is preferable that only rabbinically certified wines be served in the home, at the Conservative synagogue, and at communal events (either within the Conservative movement or in the broader Jewish community). However, since there is basis in Jewish law for permitting the nullification of forbidden substances such as the fining agents used in wine, wine fined with unkosher or dairy substances is not unkosher or dairy. Thus, one may drink uncertified wine in business or social situations where doing so is part of protocol, or where one wishes to avoid insulting one's host. Similarly, one who does not use certified wines in the home should not thereby be considered unkosher. Also, while it is preferable for the synagogue to use certified wine, it is up to the local rabbi to weigh local factors (such as congregants refusing to hold events in the synagogue if uncertified wine is forbidden), and the Kashrut of the synagogue is not impugned by the use of uncertified wines. For ritual purposes, however, only certified wines (preferably Israeli ones) should be used. (Teshuvah by Rabbi Elliot Dorff, 1985)

**CORNING WARE** is to be regarded as Pyrex and glass.

(Teshuvah by Rabbi Kassel Abelson, 1990; 021964,022866,112575, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not official positions of the CJLS.)

**EARTHENWARE** Glazed earthenware is still considered earthenware, and not china. (060661, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not an official position of the CJLS)

**GLASS DISHES** On Jan. 17, 1990, the CJLS validated two teshuvot on glass utensils, affirming both as acceptable positions:

1. a. There is no significant difference between the various types of glass cookware currently on the market.
- b. Technically, glass does not absorb and therefore does not require kashering beyond careful cleaning and rinsing; however, for symbolic and educational reasons, when utensils are to be permanently changed from milk to meat or vice versa, kashering by immersion in boiling water (*hagalah*) is desirable (though if utensils are inadvertently used without such a process, food placed in them would not become treif).
- c. Glass serving pieces should not be used for both milk and meat within a 24 hour period (though if inadvertently so used, food placed on them is not treif).

(Teshuvah by Rabbi Kassel Abelson, 1990)

2. a. For kashering glassware from dairy to meat or vice versa, cleaning and rinsing are sufficient.

b. It is not, however, minhag yisrael to kasher glassware from one meal to the next. (Teshuvah by Rabbi Howard Handler, 1990)

**KASHERING** 1. Autoclaving may be used for kashering (030161; Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not an official position of the CJLS). However, this method is only good on dishes where regular kashering is effective. China cannot be kashered by autoclaving (032162, 021964, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not official positions of the CJLS)

**KITCHEN EQUIPMENT** Used kitchen equipment must be kashered by purchaser even if purchased from a kosher caterer.. (012480, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not an official position of the CJLS)

**MICROWAVE OVEN** Microwaves without browning elements may be kashered by cleaning them as thoroughly as possible and then running them with a glass of water inside until the water boils. (Teshuvah by Rabbi Kassel Abelson,

Proceedings of the CJLS, 1980-85, pp. 221-2; 041080, 062190, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not official positions of the CJLS.)

PLASTIC DISHES 2. Are considered like porcelain. (0830558, Minutes of the CJLS; 062552, 102455, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not official positions of the CJLS.)

3. Cannot be used interchangeably for both dairy and meat.  
(123149,062552,102455, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not official positions of the CJLS)

4. Heat-resistant plastics can be kashered. (022081, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not an official position of the CJLS)

PLATE COVERS Plate covers cannot be used for both meat and milk unless they are kashered between uses. (011679, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not an official position of the CJLS)

PORCELAIN 1. Cannot be kashered. (020752, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not an official position of the CJLS)

POTTERY Glazed pottery dishes are probably as non-porous as glass; however, it is not recommended that they be used for both milk and meat, if only to preserve the principle of separation. In case of a family converting a kitchen to Kashrut observance, a more lenient position can be taken. (031187, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not an official position of the CJLS)

PRESSURE COOKER May be kashered. Removable parts should be kashered separately. (032950, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not an official position of the CJLS)

PYREX 1. Treated as glassware and may be kashered as glassware.  
(Teshuvah by Rabbi Kassel Abelson, 1990; 032354B. Minutes of the CJLS;  
032950,031954, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not official positions of the CJLS.)

PYRO CERAM Should not be used for meat and dairy even though it is to be considered glass (since glass should not be used for both). (030663, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not an official position of the CJLS)

SILVER POLISH Silver polish is a chemical. It is not a food, and as such should require no hashgachah. However, if in checking the ingredients there are obviously "treif" ingredients, the question should be reconsidered. (020998, Correspondence of the Chairperson. Not an official position of the CJLS)

SILVERSTONE / TEFLON Can Utensils Lined With Teflon or Silverstone be Kashered?

If a utensil lined with teflon or silverstone becomes treif it may be kashered by *hagalah*, by careful cleansing and by boiling water. Baking pans may not be kashered. (Teshuvah by Rabbi Kassel Abelson, approved May 29,1991)

#### MISCELLANEOUS

EATING FISH AND MEAT ON THE SAME DISH The prohibition of fish and meat is based on a specific *sakana*. Historically when the *sakana* ceased to exist, the rabbis had the power to end the prohibition. Today, we know that there is no *sakana* affecting tzaraat by eating fish and meat together. Therefore, we would permit not only putting fish and meat on the same plate, but would allow them to be consumed together. ("Is it permissible to eat fish and meat on the same dish?", by Rabbi Paul Plotkin, approved September 1998)