

# Manual for Kashering a Restaurant and Maintaining Its Kashrut

## **Rabbi Mayer Rabinowitz**

*Approved by the CJLS on October 15, 2013 by a vote of 18 in favor, none opposed and three abstaining. In favor: Rabbis Aaron Alexander, Pamela Barmash, Miriam Berkowitz, Elliot Dorff, Baruch Frydman-Kohl, Susan Grossman, Joshua Heller, Jeremy Kalmanofsky, Jane Kanarek, Gail Labovitz, Amy Levin, Jonathan Lubliner, Daniel Nevins, Paul Plotkin, Avram Reisner, Elie Spitz, Barry Starr, and Loel Weiss. Abstaining: Rabbis David Booth, David Hoffman, and Adam Kligfeld,*

### **Planning**

Converting a non-kosher restaurant to a kosher facility requires thorough advance planning, and the participation of the *Rav Hamakhshir*, the owner(s) of the establishment, and all restaurant staff. To ensure that all required steps are followed and that all individuals involved in the restaurant understand their role and responsibilities, it is advisable to create a detailed flow chart of the various steps that will be necessary to *kasher* the facility and maintain it as a kosher establishment.

The *Rav Hamakhshir* should meet a few times with the owner(s) and manager(s) of the establishment prior to the actual process of converting the restaurant, to discuss their reasons for converting the restaurant, and to review the requirements involved in the entire process. Successful supervision is ultimately about a willing merchant who wants to provide kosher food to the public, and who values your service and your sense of trust in his/her integrity. You are there to give guidance and to protect against mistakes which are inevitable. If you do not trust the merchant to begin with, you are best advised not to offer supervision at all.

If you do decide to proceed with giving supervision, your discussions should include:

- rules and requirements related to operating a kosher establishment
- limitations on the hours of operation
- a list of *hashgahot* acceptable to the *Rav Hamakhshir*
- how to deal with other *hashgahot*
- the functions that require the presence and approval of the *mashgiah*
- how disputes between the owner(s) and the *mashgiah* are resolved
- who has the authority to make which types of decisions
- Arrangements for a facility walk-through to decide what must be *kashered* and how, as well as what new equipment will be required.
- A timetable for closing the restaurant for *kashering*
- the procedure for the removal of all non-kosher supplies and equipment
- the timetable for installation of new equipment
- procedures for using all equipment that has been *kashered*

- training of current staff and of any future staff
- fees and expenses associated with *kashrut* supervision

It is recommended that any Rabbi planning to undertake the supervision of a kosher establishment take the RA *Rav Hamakhshir* Course, in order to understand all aspects of running a commercial food establishment according to *halakhah*.

### **Cleaning and Kashering**

The *Rav Hamkhshir* should walk through the entire establishment with the owner(s) to indicate what things may or must be *kashered*, how these items are to be *kashered*, and what items must be discarded and replaced. The walk-through must include storage areas and delivery areas, not only to ascertain what must be discarded, but to allow the *Rav Hamakhshir* to become totally familiar with the entire facility. All spaces, including those behind “locked” doors, must be examined, and a procedure must be established to monitor and control all entrances into the facility.

The basic rule is that everything that is to be *kashered* must be thoroughly cleaned before it is *kashered*. Items that are made of separate pieces must be taken apart, so that all parts of the item can be thoroughly cleaned. In most cases, items can be *kashered* by means of boiling water. All utensils should have the status of *אינו בן יומו* in order for the *kashering* process to proceed. But, if that is not possible, then a *davar pagum* may be put into the utensil, which will make anything that had been absorbed into the pot פגום, thereby rendering it *אינו בן יומו*.

The general rule for kashering is כבולעו כך פולטו. Therefore, utensils that were used for cooking are *kashered* by means of boiling, while those utensils that were used for broiling over an open fire, must be heated until they are red hot. Stoves and ovens must be heated until they are red hot. Utensils that come in contact with fire require לבון גמור. Silverware must be *kashered* in the same way as metal utensils. Plastic, earthenware and glassware should be replaced. If there is a concern that an item will break while being heated, or if an item cannot withstand the required heat, it should not be *kashered*. Wooden butcher blocks should be thoroughly cleaned and then shaved or sanded sufficiently, to create thoroughly new surfaces. Any utensil that raises questions as to whether it can be properly *kashered*, should be replaced. We do not recommend *kashering* frying pans. Whenever a utensil has a build-up of residue that cannot be removed, the item should be replaced. If בעין, an actual piece of food, still appears on the utensil after the cleaning process, the utensil cannot be *kashered*.

When *kashering* is done with water, the water must be boiling when the item is placed in it, and the water must continue to boil for at least 10 seconds. לבון קל is at 500 degrees Fahrenheit for 1 ½ hours. לבון גמור is best accomplished by using a blowtorch. (In the list of Specific Items you will find directions which לבון to use.) This should be done only by a person properly trained in the use of this equipment, and appropriate class fire extinguishers must be present. The local fire department should be consulted, to ensure compliance with all fire codes and regulations.

If the equipment cannot be easily disassembled or if it may have sensors embedded in it, then a repairman or the manufacturer's representative should be consulted, to either help take the equipment apart, or to explain what can and what cannot be done with the equipment.

## Specific Items

### 1. Convection Ovens

Remove all oven racks. Remove the fan housing/covering from the back of the oven, and thoroughly clean it. A spray abrasive cleaner (e.g. Dow Easy Off) should be used on the entire interior of the oven, including low walls, the oven floor, and the fan assembly. All parts of the door and the door crease should be cleaned thoroughly. Spray the doors including the glass. If the back plate cannot be removed, then thoroughly spray the cleaner over and inside the entire fan assembly. After all areas are covered with the spray cleaner, heat the oven to 300 degrees Fahrenheit for 20 minutes. Wash the oven with a long-handled brush, using cold water and soap, removing all the loose dirt. Take care not to short electrical parts of the oven. Reapply cleaner to areas that have a buildup of dirt (steel wool and scrapers may be required). Baked on dirt and grease must be removed before you can begin to actually *kasher* the oven, as these are considered to be בעין. בעין is considered food and not פגם and will be a problem with ריחה (smell imparting a taste), and בטול (nullification). After all the dirt has been removed and a visual check has been made, the oven should be turned on to the highest possible setting for 1 ½ hours, with the fan blowing. It is advisable for the *Rav Hamakhshir* to supervise this process but leave the actual work to others, but you should be dressed appropriately for this type of work, to properly evaluate the effectiveness of the cleaning.

### 2. Oven Racks and Grates

The easiest way to *kasher* the racks and grates is to place them on a gas stove top. (In the past, people have *kashered* them with a blow torch, which has often caused damage to the racks or grates). Wrap the entire stove top - with the grates inside - in two layers of aluminum foil wrap, with the shiny side facing downward. This will ensure maximum heat retention. Be sure that the entire stove top is covered with foil. Set the stove top burners on a low flame. Then tightly seal the foil wrap all around the stove top and raise the flame on the burners to their highest setting. After ½ hour carefully open the foil with long metal pliers and carefully check if לבון (the metal is glowing with a red hue) has been achieved. If לבון has been achieved, let the racks or grates cool for a while, and then carefully remove the foil to allow cool-down. Then return the racks to the newly *kashered* oven.

### 3. Regular Ovens

The procedure for regular ovens is the same as it is for convection ovens, except for the doors. In a regular oven the door is sometimes used to hold pans or trays, resulting in spillage on the door. Therefore, a לבון גמור with a blow torch may be needed for the door. Another alternative is a thorough cleaning of any traces of food (בעיו) followed by לבון קל. (The required heating would be קש נשרף מבהוץ. Close the oven and heat it to 500 degrees Fahrenheit for 1 ½ hours.

#### **4. Rotating Ovens, Baker's Oven**

Follow same procedure as that for convection ovens (see above). If food was placed directly on the oven floor, follow the procedure for pizza ovens, as indicated below.

#### **5. Pizza ovens**

If the food had only indirect contact with the oven (i.e. pizzas that are always on a tray), then follow the procedure for convection ovens. If the food had direct contact with any part of the ovens, follow the procedure below, once you have checked with the manufacturer of the oven.

Disconnect all gas lines and remove and clean any heat probe sensors. Pile up the charcoal and ignite. When all the coals are burning and turn white, spread them over the entire surface of the oven floor for ten minutes to effect לבון. Continue to monitor the oven floor, and if you see that it begins to buckle, extinguish the charcoals. The oven cannot be *koshered*, it must be replaced.

#### **6. Grills**

Follow the same procedures as for pizza ovens, above. Coals should be placed both over and under the grill.

#### **7. Microwave Ovens**

Commercial microwave ovens should not be *koshered*, due to the great difficulty in cleaning them properly.

Household microwave ovens should be thoroughly cleaned. Special care must be taken to clean the door area, especially the buildup of dirt near the rubber gasket that holds the door in place. Place at least 6 ounces of water in an 8 ounce cup into the microwave and heat it until a discernible cloud of steam forms (approximately 10-15 minutes). This steam vapor must fill the entire chamber of the microwave. Refill the cup and place it inside the microwave oven again, in a different spot. Again, heat up the water until steam vapor appears and fills the entire chamber. Due to normal spillage that occurs in the oven, the rotator plate should be removed and an עירוי should be made on the plate of the microwave. It is best to replace the plate if possible. If there is no plate, then an עירוי should be made on the floor.

#### **8. Flat Top and Grate Stoves**

Clean the flat top or grates thoroughly, to avoid grease fire. Cover the entire top surface with at least 3 to 5 layers of foil - shiny side down - and heat to the highest level. After ½ hour check carefully, by looking for the glowing red color, to see if the fire has caused לבון.

#### **9. Steam Tables**

Every area of the steam tables must be cleaned thoroughly. If the steam table can be taken apart, dismantle and clean each section carefully. If there are lips in the cutout, the table cannot be

koshered. If the steam table cannot be taken apart, apply cleaner to all parts, including the underside of the table. Heat the unit - without water - with the cleaner still in place. Then remove the cleaner. Check for cleanliness of the under parts and any cut outs. This should be done by using a flashlight and mirror, and by passing your hand and fingers underneath, to ascertain the cleanliness of these areas. If there is still בעין then the table cannot be *kashered*. If all the בעין has been removed, fill the table's water well to the very top, and bring water to a rolling boil. Without a rolling boil it is not considered *kashered*.

An alternative method for *kashering* is to make a לבון קל by using a blow torch. This needs to be done very carefully, so as not to buckle the steam table.

## **10. Warming Tables/Warming Cabinets**

Thoroughly clean the inside of the cabinets, including the shelves and racks, and all other cabinet components. Depending on the size of the warmer, place four to eight Sternos in the closed warmer, allowing them to burn out. This will accomplish לבון קל. If the metal shelves or racks are excessively dirty, follow the *kashering* procedures for a convection oven. If there is a rubber gasket around the doors, and if the cabinet normally uses Sternos, it can be kashered. If the cabinet does not use Sternos, it cannot be *kashered*.

## **11. Dish Warmers**

Clean the warmers thoroughly and conduct a visual inspection, as well as a manual inspection, by using your hand and fingers to confirm cleanliness. Place liners in the warmer to cover all surfaces that have and will come in direct contact with dishes.

## **12. Counter Tops**

Stainless Steel: clean the surface thoroughly and then do a עירוי כלי ראשון on the entire surface.

Wood: Sand down the surface, until the surface is completely smooth.

Formica: If counter top is smooth and there are no cracks or hole, do a עירוי כלי ראשון. If there are cracks or holes, replace the counter top. If the counter top had hot food placed directly upon it, use either an אבן מלובן or a steam-powered jenny, in order to accomplish הגעלה. A אבן מלובן can be used by heating up a stone and placing it above the counter to be *kashered*, and pour the boiling hot water over the stone. Continue moving the stone and boiling water so that the entire counter top surface has been covered with boiling water. One must make sure that the stone and water remain very hot throughout.

## **13. Stainless Steel Sinks**

Clean sink, faucet, drainage area, the outside of the sink, back splashes, underlying surfaces and all exposed parts of the sink thoroughly. After cleaning, wait 24 hours. Then do a proper עירוי to complete the *kashering* of the sink. Porcelain sinks cannot be *kashered*.

## 14. Blenders

If blenders have been used for cold foods only, a thorough cleaning is sufficient. If used for hot foods (over 120 degrees Fahrenheit), or חריף i.e. sharp foods, then all parts of the blender should be removed and *kashered* by means of הגעלה.

## 15. Food Processors and Knives

Processors should be *kashered* by means of הגעלה if we have reason to think that they were used for טריף and especially hot טריף foods. Knives, if made of one piece of metal, are *kashered* by means of הגעלה. If the knives have two parts, they can only be *kashered* if they are made of metal and soldered together. If they have come into contact with fire then לבון גמור is required.

## 16. Silverware

Each piece of cutlery should be thoroughly cleaned. Then each piece should be dropped into boiling water one by one. Remove the silverware from the water and rinse with cold water. If a basket is to be used for *koshering*, place the silverware in the basket so that all the silverware is covered by the water. Shake the basket while it is immersed in the boiling water, to allow the boiling water to make contact with all parts of the silverware. Make sure the water continues boiling after the basket has been immersed.

## 17. Coffee Grinder

If the grinder was used for non-kosher flavored coffee, it should be thoroughly cleaned and then it may be used.

## 18 Coffee Percolators

If the percolator was used for non-kosher flavored coffee, it should be thoroughly cleaned. After 24 hours, pour water into the tank and put it through a normal cycle, without coffee in it. Allow the water to boil, creating a rolling boil that will overflow the top of the rim.

## 19. Deep Fryers

To clean a deep fryer, boil up with Drano, and go over it with a blow torch afterwards. See to it that all residue is removed, including any residue that had been burned onto the surface of the heating tubes and in the oil draining section. The thermometer may need to be removed to allow access for proper cleaning. The unit may then be *kashered* by means of הגעלה or לבון קל.

## 20. Dishwashers

Dishwashers must be thoroughly cleaned, and then flushed with boiling water. *Kashering* an industrial dishwasher involves removing the filters; cleaning them; and sometimes removing the temperature controls or bypassing them to allow the water in all the chambers to reach the temperature required for הגעלה. The temperature controls can be *kashered* by הגעלה.

## 21. Items to be replaced

Since we hope to serve a wider audience than only Conservative Jews, we should use the more universally accepted standards for koshering. However, if circumstances make this impractical, one may rely on the various opinions of the CJLS on koshering items. A list of the teshuvot is found below before the glossary.

The following items should not be *kashered*; they should be replaced with new items. The are: china, Corning ware, Corelle, Duralex/Pyrex, earthenware, enamel, frying pans, wok frying pans, glass (the exception is drinking glasses that have been used for cold beverages only), any plastic item that is cracked or has crevices or permanent stains, items with rubber, where the rubber is not completely intact. Teflon pots, pans, and trays must be replaced, if they cannot withstand לבון גמור. You will need to replace any other items that would be ruined by direct heat. If there is a question about an item - replace it.

## 22. Refrigerators and Storeroom

All refrigerators should be thoroughly cleaned so that all surfaces and shelves are free from any dirt or residue of food. Storerooms must be thoroughly cleaned and all residues should be removed. The same should be done with the shelving.

23. טבילת כלים is not required.

## Supervising a Kosher Restaurant

The *Rav Hamakhshir* and the *mashgiah* should do a thorough check of the establishment, to see that all equipment and all areas of the restaurant have either been *kashered* or replaced with new equipment. The dining area should have all necessary utensils that are either new or have been *kashered*. Once the kitchen is koshered, all utensils should be properly labeled (meat and *pareve*, or dairy and *pareve*).

Only previously *kashered* liver from an acceptable rabbinic certification should be used. No raw liver should ever be allowed on the premises.

The entire staff of the establishment must be thoroughly and carefully trained. These include the kitchen staff, the serving staff, and the counter staff who sell foods for take-out. The staff must understand that if any mistake is made, the *mashgiah* must be informed immediately, and only the *mashgiah* can decide what steps must be taken to deal with the issues. It is important to instruct the staff that they may not bring food into the restaurant from outside, and that only food prepared in the restaurant may be eaten within the facility.

The staff should be given a list of accepted *hashgahot* for products that are brought into the establishment. Any product that does not have an acceptable *hashgaha* must be set aside - unopened - and brought to the attention of the *mashgiah*. It should be made clear to the staff that the use of any product without an acceptable *hashgaha* may cause a shutdown of the restaurant and require the *kashering* of the entire establishment. Therefore, all shipments must be inspected by the *mashgiah* before they can be stored or used by the staff. All decisions of the *mashgiah* must be followed, and it should be clear to all employees and owners that the *mashgiah* has the

right to close the restaurant immediately. If the problem is not properly remedied, the supervision will be rescinded.

A detailed list of ingredients that may be used without *hashgaha* should be given to the owner/operator. No deviation is permitted without consulting the *Rav Hamakhshir*. If any of these ingredients are available with an acceptable *hashgaha*, they should be used.

A list of fresh ingredients that don't require *hashgaha* should be provided by the *Rav Hamakhshir*. The procedures for using them should be detailed and in writing. For example, leafy vegetables should be washed and inspected for bugs. If possible, eggs should be checked for bloodspots, especially for local produced eggs. If not practical, it is still acceptable to use the eggs without checking. This is based on the fact that today, hens used for commercial egg production are not put together with roosters and therefore, there are no fertilized eggs.

A list of baked goods, both fresh and packaged, should be provided by the *Rav Hamakhshir*. Local and national *hashgahot* should be included in the list. If the establishment serves meat, the baked goods must be clearly marked *pareve*.

In a dairy restaurant, if dairy products are being used, a detailed list of products and *hashgahot* should be given to the owner/operator. A list of products not requiring *hashgaha* must also be provided. Whenever possible use products with a *hashgaha*.

A detailed list of drinks with *hashgahot* should be made available. These include soft drinks and hard drinks as well as mixers, in a restaurant with a liquor license. If customers are allowed to bring alcoholic beverages into the restaurant, these beverages must be checked for a proper *hashgahah*.

The *Rav Hamakhshir* must provide a list of cleaning materials and products that are acceptable for use in the facility.

A detailed plan of how and when supplies are delivered and how they are to be checked should be given to the owner/operator. Meat deliveries require the presence of the *mashgiah* or the *Rav Hamakhshir*, and must be checked carefully against the invoice. For example, if more meat is delivered than was invoiced, the *mashgiah* should investigate immediately.

The *Rav Hamakhshir* and the *mashgiah* must have a set of keys and the alarm code to the establishment. Food preparation may not take place if the *Rav Hamakhshir* or *mashgiah* is not on site.

A *mashgiah temidi* is required for a meat restaurant, and the establishment should not be open nor should any food preparation take place without the presence of the *mashgiah*. If that is not possible, then a *mashgiah nikhnas veyotzay* may be used in a meat restaurant. However we strongly recommend that you consult with members of the *kashruth* sub-committee of the CJLS, to establish the special procedures and controls that would need to be followed.

This manual does not apply to the running of a restaurant during Pesah. Check with members of the sub-committee of the CJLS if you plan to open for Pesah.



If the restaurant will serve only dairy or vegetarian foods, then the *mashgiah* can be *nikhtas veyotzay*. If the establishment will be open on Shabbat and it is under Jewish ownership, then we strongly urge the *Rav Hamakhshir* to endorse only the food, but not the establishment itself. Food from restaurants that prepare food on Shabbat should not be bought until enough time has elapsed that patrons are not eating the food that was actually prepared on Shabbat. Another option is to arrange for the Jewish restaurant owner sell the store every Friday afternoon to a non-Jew, and buy it back every Saturday night. This can be facilitated by a document that is available from the RA.

For restaurants serving fish, a detailed list of kosher fish and *hashgahot* should be given to the owner/operator. Check all deliveries for the proper *hashgahah* label or check that the fish comes with סימנים attached.

If off-site catering will be offered, all prepared food from the restaurant must be packaged and sealed carefully with the oversight of the *mashgiah* at the establishment. The food should be checked again, when opened at the catering site. The kitchen at the site must be checked by the *Rav Hamakhshir*, and a *mashgiah* must be present. The *mashgiah* will seal the utensils and foods that are to be returned to the establishment. At the restaurant, all sealed items are to be opened under the supervision of the *mashgiah*.

### ***Mashgiah* checklist**

Did you supervise the delivery of all products?

Did you examine the inner package as well as the outer package for an acceptable *hekhsher*?

How often do you inspect the inventory?

How is the kitchen locked and secured?

Have you ensured that workers do not bring in their own food?

What controls are there to monitor side and back doors?

How are outgoing orders or food for catering packed and labeled?

Can the kitchen or storerooms be opened when you are not present?

Do all refrigerators and freezers have locks? Do you lock them before you leave?

### **CJLS Teshuvot on Kashrut.**

Abelson, May Glass Cookware Be Kasherred. OH 451:26 1990a

Handler, On Kashering Glass Vessels. OH 451; 26 1990b

Abelson, Can Utensils Lined with Silverstone be koshered. OH451:3 1991

Plotkin, Manual for the kashering of Bakeries. OH 451:3 2004

Rabinowitz & Reisner, Tevilat Kelim. YD 120:1 200

## **Glossary of Terms**

**בעין:** An actual piece of food that must be removed, before the process of making an item kosher can begin, as opposed to a remnant taste.

**בן יומן:** Literally "of the day", e.g. a pot used within the previous twenty four hours

**ביטול:** Nullification of a foreign taste by a ratio of sixty to one.

**פגום דבר פגום:** The food taste absorbed into a pot after twenty-four hours is considered stale (פגום), and does not have the status of food, which needs a sixty to one ratio for nullification. Immersing the pot into boiling water suffices to remove the פגום. When it is inconvenient to wait twenty-four hours, one can boil water in the pot and add a caustic substance that is absorbed into the pot and renders the fresh absorbed taste into פגום.

**אינו בן יומן:** Not ben yomo i.e. twenty-four hours or more have passed since the pot was last used and cleaned.

**הגעלה:** Kashering a utensil by placing it in boiling water.

**עירוי:** Pouring boiled water onto an item to be made kosher.

**קש נשרף מבחוץ:** Hot enough to char a straw placed upon the item that was heated.

**לבון גמור:** Making a utensil kosher by heating it directly in a fire until it becomes red hot.

**לבון קל:** Making a utensil kosher by heating it directly in fire, until it becomes hot enough to char a straw placed on

**מעלה רתיחה:** A rolling boil.

**ריחה:** Aroma. e.g. a cheese cake and a pareve bread in the oven together. The dairy aroma of the cheese cake will enter the bread and make it dairy.

**טבילת כלים:** Immersing in a *mikvah* vessels made or used by gentiles.