

**Concurring Opinion to Manual for Kashering a Restaurant and
Maintaining Its Kashrut
Rabbi Aaron Alexander**

This paper was submitted, in November 2013, as a concurrence to "Manual for Kashering a Restaurant and Maintaining Its Kashrut" by Rabbi Mayer Rabinowitz. Dissenting and concurring papers are not official positions of the CJLS.

Rabbi Rabinowitz has provided an essential guide for the supervision of food services for Rabbis. It is clear that the intent of this manual is to begin from a position of the *halakhic* ideal. Which is to say, create situations in which mistakes are unlikely to occur using even strict standards of kashrut. Of course, each individual *rav ha-machshir* may deviate in areas where the ideal is impossible, but still within parameters of mainstream CJ *kashrut*. It is also important to further note, as Rabbi Rabonowitz alludes to, that the trust and integrity of a mashgiaah proprietor relationship goes both ways. Just as the mashgiaah must trust the purveyor, so too the purveyor ought trust the mashgiaah. Ideally, a relationship is built between both parties that allows for maximum transparency. No mashgiaah can have her eyes everywhere at all times. Trust that the kitchen crew will want to approach their mashgiaah with questions and concerns is the best possible defense against serving food that isn't kosher. And this, quite frankly, creates an opportunity for partnership where both parties feel proud of the end result. The final product being served is always the result of of a team, of which the mashgiaah is an invaluable member, to the extent possible.

One area, though, creates a standard that I think reaches beyond even a strict standard. Rabbi Rabinowitz asserts, "The Rav Hamakhshir must provide a list of cleaning materials and products that are acceptable for use in the facility."

It seems to me that while proactive strictness regarding the food product and equipment *kashering* is prudent, cleaning products may go too far. They don't need hechshers (they have them, sure, but not because they need them). Unless they are homemade products from food-type substances (e.g. vinegar), highly improbable, they simply can just be bought as the owner sees fit. It isn't a food item. This concurring affirms that a conversation about cleaning materials may well happen, but the materials themselves need no *hechsher*.