



CONGREGATION TORAS CHAIM

An intimate space...Grow at your pace.

February 3-4, 2017 ■ 8 Shevat, 5777 ■ Shabbos Bo
Mincha: 5:45P / Candlelighting: 5:44P ■ Shabbos Ends 6:53P

KIDDUSH this Shabbos is sponsored by Rabbi Dovid & Chava Miriam Bacharach “out of hakaras hatov to Tatti and Mommy and family for having us for one full month, and making the transition from one to two as smooth and easy as possible. We love you, Dovid, Chava Miriam, Shoshana, and Russi.” **SHALOSH SEUDOS** this Shabbos is sponsored by the shul. Please contact Rabbi Yaakov Rich at 972-835-6016 if you are interested in sponsoring kiddush or shalosh seudos in the future.

■ SHABBOS SCHEDULE

Friday Night, February 3rd

- » Mincha/Kabbalos Shabbos/Maariv – 5:45P
- » Candlelighting – 5:44P

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- » Shacharis followed by Kiddush–8:30A
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■ WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

- » Sunday Shacharis–8A
- » Sunday Mincha/Maariv–5:50P
- » Weekday Shacharis–6:40A
- » Weekday Mincha–5:50P
- » Weekday Maariv–8P

■ REFUAH SHELAIMA

MEN

- » Aharon Shlomo ben Soroh Tzirel (Father of Don Goldstein)
- » Zoosav ben Lipke (Father of Suzanne Luftig)
- » Yechiel Mordechai ben Devorah (Brother of Ken Jarmel)
- » Itai ben Shoshana (Son of Ehoud & Shoshana Wilson)

WOMEN

- » Leah Esther bas Yenta Leah (Lori Jarmel)
- » Yenta Leah bas Shayna (Mother of Lori Jarmel)

■ A REASON TO LIVE: RABBI LABEL LAM

And HASHEM spoke to Moshe and to Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, “This month shall be to you the head of the months; to you it shall be the first of the months of the year.” (Shemos 12:1-2)

Rabbi Isaac says; ‘It was only necessary to begin the Torah from, “This month is for you...”, because that’s the first Mitzvah that Israel was commanded in. What is the reason it begins with Breishis? (Exodus 12:2)” -Rashi- On the first word in Chumash- “Breishis”

Rashi spells out clearly that it is sensible that the Torah should begin from “HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem- This month is for you!” Why is this verse a more worthy starting point, than the beginning of creation? Embedded in the question is an important piece of information. The Torah is not a book of stories, history, or cosmology. It has not been crafted and presented to humanity by the Creator for satisfying scientific or historical curiosities. Rather it serves an extraordinarily practical purpose. What exactly is that purpose?

Imagine I would call a giant meeting inviting investors to learn about an authentic investment strategy that guarantees that you double you money every year. (Remember you are being asked to imagine.) If it would be true we could fill Yankee stadium plus in no time. When the seats are full and the seminar begins, I start to ramble on about how when my great grandfather came to this country he was so broke he couldn’t afford pockets.

After a while of the history lesson the audience begins to grow impatient. Eventually I get to the bottom line and the crowd is very pleased beyond words but the gnawing questions remains, “Why the lesson is history?” Implied in that question is the premise that we came here for some major purpose and although you may have some other good reason for beginning from back there, the money making info was the real meat and potatoes we all came for.

Similarly, the Torah has reasons the big beginning was needed but the real substantial meaning is contained and begins

with “HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem- This month is for you!” Why is that the so valuable even more so than an investment strategy for doubling your money annually?

We have a problem! It’s part of the human condition. What do we do about time? The hour glass gives us a perfect visual. The time we have left is the amount of sand on top. The time we’ve spent is piling up slowly but steadily on the bottom. Each present moment glides swiftly through the birthing channel quietly converting the future to the past. How do we hold time? It is slipping through our hands. Pictures and memories are weak and transient monuments. Then along comes the Torah and we begin to learn about MITZVOS! If we can connect a deed, a moment, a thought, any and every one to HASHEM Who WAS – IS – and Will Be! We have essentially connected with eternity. That is the definition of the word Mitzvah which means a commandment, and to connect, and to be in the company of -the Commander! Now life is no long being lost! Time is being wisely invested!

Rashi implies that although the age of the universe may be a matter of sincere intellectual curiosity more critically important is “what to do about NOW and NOW and NOW?! King Solomon already told us there is nothing “chadash” new under the sun but beyond the sun there is a constant Chiddush- renewal. HASHEM looks into the Torah and creates the world as the Zohar tells us.

We recite twice daily that HASHEM renews the creation with His kindness constantly. Almost all blessing are present tense, “Borah pri ha etz-Who makes the fruit of the tree”, because it is being made now and now again. So we can appreciate that it is not an old world but a new world and each moment is a ray of eternity waiting to be realized as a new now for you.

■ COCA-COLA KASHRUS CONTROVERSY: RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

Ice-Cold Sunshine Aah! The cool refreshing taste of “The Real Thing”! Is there anything (besides maybe baseball and apple pie) that is considered more American? Everyone also knows that around the world (pretty much) there is almost nothing more kosher than good, old-fashioned Coke. Why, you can even ask Grandma, that back in the day, before mp3s, microwaves, dishwashers, and even World War II, it was “Always Coca-Cola”. “The great national temperance beverage” was THE drink of choice for all, even the strict kosher consumer.

But, it wasn’t always that way. We all have a certain person to thank for that, Rabbi Tuvia (Tobias) Geffen, Chief Rabbi of Atlanta, Georgia for many decades. He was one of the select few who actually knew the closely guarded secret ingredient in Coke. Back in the 1920s and 30s, Coke was looking to (and I’m sure still is) expand their market share when it came to their attention that if they received a hashgacha, then many more Jews (and others who look specifically for kosher products) would drink freely of the “pause that refreshes”.

So, the directors approached the most likely candidate to grant Rabbinic supervision, Rabbi Geffen. Coke was, after all, invented and headquartered in Atlanta. He was more than willing to check it out, as many of his congregants were asking him about the kashrus status of Coke.

Kosher Coke? His findings were mixed for, although technically the drink was kosher and was permitted to be drunk, it was questionable if he was allowed to give it his seal of approval to allow observant Jews to purchase it. The reason was that although they claimed it to be “as pure as sunlight”, it turned out that there was a non-kosher ingredient, later revealed to be animal-based

glycerin, in the makeup of Coke, but it was only present in minute quantities. Therefore, it would be permitted to drink, for the non-kosher ingredient was batel b'shishim, and therefore considered nullified.

However, for him to grant Coke hashgacha posed a potential problem in a different category, that of "Ain Mevattelin Issur Lechatchila". This means that although if a non-kosher substance would accidentally fall into kosher food (as long as there was the prerequisite 60 times the amount of non-kosher that fell in) it would be permitted to drink, nonetheless, if one would add it on purpose with the express intention of nullifying it, the entire mixture becomes forbidden for the person who transgressed and for whomever he intended to benefit.

The issue at stake here was that the Coca-Cola Company was obviously putting this non-kosher ingredient in the batch purposefully, as it was part and parcel of the Coke everyone knew and loved.

On the other hand, it was not just a simple open-and-shut question, for the Coca-Cola Company was not owned or run by Jews, and quite obviously was not marketing Coke exclusively for Jews.

Therefore, Rabbi Geffen was in a bit of a dilemma: Did this situation fall under the category of "Ain Mevattelin Issur Lechatchila" and therefore Coke would be unacceptable for purchase by the kosher consumer? And, even if it did not, and was permissible for purchase, was he allowed to give his hashgacha on a product that contained a non-kosher ingredient?

Before we get to the punch line, let us "go through the inyan".

Non-Jewish Nullification Already in the 1500s, the Radbaz, distinguishes between a scenario where a non-Jew nullifies non-kosher, where he is of the opinion that a Jew is allowed to eat of the mixture, as opposed to where a non-Jew is selling non-kosher, where he holds that it is forbidden for a Jew to purchase. He maintains that when a Jew is purchasing the item, it is as if he himself nullified it, and it therefore becomes assur, forbidden, for him to eat. Many halachic decisors concurred with his reasoning and likewise forbade a Jew from purchasing items that had non-kosher nullified inside of it.

However, the majority of Poskim disagreed with this rationale, concluding that it is improbable to make such a distinction, as the Rambam himself held that it is acceptable to procure such items as long as it was done by a non-Jew, and is therefore suitable for purchase.

Still, to further complicate our case, the Tashbatz made a further qualification to this permissible ruling, following the precedent of the Rashba and Raavad. They aver that although one may rely upon a non-Jew's nullification for purchase in infrequent circumstances, conversely, if the non-Jew is doing it for his job, or on a frequent basis, then certainly it is considered as if the Jew himself nullified it. Several Poskim agreed with this decision as well. Following this ruling would seem to imply that Coke would have to be prohibited to the kosher consumer, as it is definitely mass produced.

How About a Coke? So, now our being the wiser, having a rudimentary understanding of the issues involved, what did Rabbi Geffen decide to do? Feeling uncomfortable by having to make such a decision (sort of like between a rock and a hard place), where

Gedolim through the agheshavetaken stands on both sides of the matter, he did the only thing he felt he could do – try to make shalom! He went to Coca-Cola and asked them to change their formula! Surprisingly, out of respect for him, the executives listened and the company removed the problematic ingredients, and replaced them with kosher alternatives (vegetable-based glycerin), making the soft drink kosher lechatchila for everyone, proving the adage that "things", including kashrus, "go better with Coca-Cola".

Rabbi Geffen later published the whole account, as well as the halachic reasoning behind his actions, in his responsum. Later halachic authorities as well ruled similarly to Rabbi Geffen's sound logic and reasoning, averring that although there is what to rely upon regarding purchasing, nevertheless, when it comes to granting hashgacha, a Rabbinic authority should not give a seal of approval to an item that contains nullified issur. In fact, Rav Moshe Feinstein z"l classified doing so, if nullification is the only justification they are relying upon to proclaim the product kosher, as "mechuar hadavar", utterly disgraceful or disgusting.

So the next time you partake in a nice, cool, refreshing glass of Coke, you should think of Rabbi Geffen, as well as all the behind the scenes kashrus issues that went into making sure that even the kosher consumer can enjoy "the cold, crisp taste of Coke".

Passover Passport to Refreshment There is actually more to the story. It turns out that another ingredient inside Coke was chametz, and as the laws of bittul do not apply to chametz on Pesach, Coke was therefore technically not kosher for Passover. At Rabbi Geffen's behest, this ingredient was also replaced by a kosher l'pesach alternative. In fact, Coca-Cola was considered kosher for Pesach until the "New Coke" debacle in the 1980s. When the company reinstated the "Original Coca-Cola Classic", there was one minor change in the formula. Cane sugar was replaced with a cheaper alternative, high-fructose corn syrup. The one kashrus concern with this is that it is kitniyos, which Ashkenazim do not consume on Pesach. That is why Coca-Cola, and other soft drinks, require specific Passover supervision. There are numerous die-hard Original Coke aficionados who drive many miles during the Passover shopping season to major metropolitan areas with a large Jewish concentration, just to purchase "the Coke with the yellow bottle cap". For these fans, if it's not the Passover Coke, it's just not the "Real Thing".

Postscript: Coca-Cola: The First Hashgacha Interestingly, it is known that, historically, Rabbi Geffen was not actually the first to grant hashgacha on Coca-Cola. In certain regional markets, several Rabbonim had given hashgacha in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and the Vaadei HaKashrus of Buffalo, Chicago and Rochester likewise followed. In fact, there were ads for kosher Coke published in the famed HaPardes Torah Journal. These ads contained a small letter from Rav Shmuel Aharon Halevi Pardes, the journal's editor, that he visited the Coca-Cola factory in Atlanta, and that they 'revealed to him all of their secrets, including their secret formula', and he found 'hamashkeh Coca-Cola kosher lishtoso al pi hadin'.

Good Shabbos

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■ CLASSES

- » Hilchos Niddah for men (Sunday 7-8A)
- » Before Shacharis Gemara Yevamos for men (M-Fr, 6-6:40A)
- » NQ Daf HaYomi Kesuvos for men (Sunday-Thursday 8:15P)
- » Learn to Learn Gemara (Tue & Thur 7-8P)
- » Chassidus (15 mins before weekday mincha)
- » Pirkei Avos/Chumash for men & women (Shabbos 60 mins before mincha)
- » Marriage Chaburah for women (Sunday 8P)