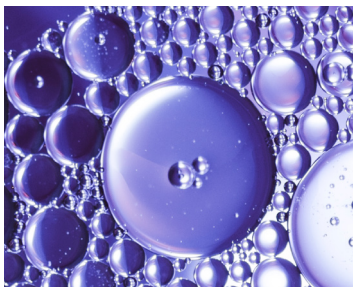
THE OU NEWSLETTER FOR THE KASHRUS PROFESSIONAL

The Daf HaKashrus

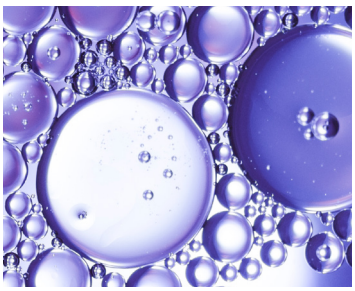
VOL. 34 NO. 5 October - November 2026 / Cheshvan 5787



The Ingredient Panel

Proplyene Glycol

BY RABBI AKIVA SAUER, RC, OLEOCHEMICALS AND DAIRY



You may not have heard of propylene glycol (PG), but you likely use products containing it every day. Its properties as a humectant (it absorbs moisture, allowing a product to remain fresh), solvent, and carrier for flavors make PG a common ingredient in baked goods, beverages, desserts, lotions, vitamins, cleaners, and many other products.

Propylene glycol has traditionally been classified as a Group 1 ingredient, meaning it presents no kashrus concern and is acceptable from any source without kosher certification. This classification is based on the conventional and still dominant production process, in which water reacts with propylene oxide, an inherently kosher byproduct of petroleum refining.

A new and very limited, but well-established method of production has resulted in a modified classification of propylene glycol. Several companies now manufacture PG through glycerol hydrogenolysis, which uses hydrogen and a catalyst to convert glycerin into propylene glycol. Glycerin is highly kosher-sensitive: it may be derived from kosher feedstocks, such as soybean, palm, or coconut oil, or from non-kosher sources, such as tallow and used cooking oil (UCO).

Two factors are driving this alternative production method. First, because the glycerin feedstock may come from plant or animal sources rather than petroleum, the resulting PG can be marketed as "bio-based," "green," or "renewable"—terms that appeal to today's market. Second, geopolitical conditions in the Strait of Hormuz have reduced the availability and increased the cost of petroleum-based products, prompting companies to seek alternative sources of propylene glycol.

This development is concerning because companies treat PG as a Group 1 ingredient and do not verify its kosher status could inadvertently purchase material made from non-kosher glycerin. The risk is compounded by the widespread use of repackers, who buy PG in bulk and transfer it into smaller containers, making the original source difficult—if not impossible—to trace.

The current group one classification of propylene glycol now reads: Propylene Glycol (Petrochemical Only) to minimize or eliminate concern that uncertified propylene glycol can be sourced from a non-petrochemical source.

At present, the issue appears limited to three companies whose combined output represents less than two percent of global propylene glycol production. Our research also indicates that the glycerin these companies currently use presents no kashrus concern. Furthermore, petroleum-based PG producers are unlikely to convert existing facilities to glycerin-based production because doing so would require millions of dollars in capital investment to retrofit their facilities for glycerin-based production. Nevertheless, there are companies that are in the development stage of this production method and could begin production at any time, so the situation requires continued monitoring.

This development reminds us that in a rapidly changing world, kashrus cannot be taken for granted—even with an ingredient as seemingly simple as propylene glycol.

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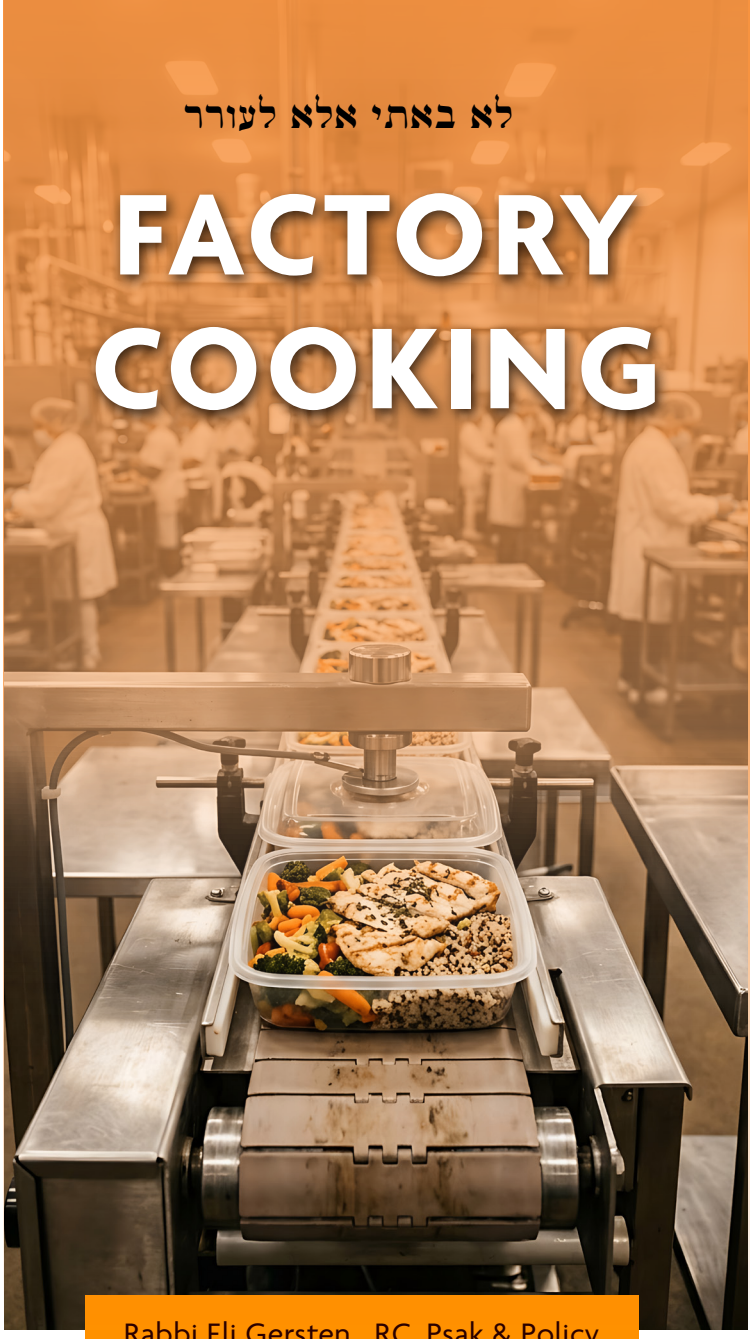
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FACTORY COOKING



Rabbi Eli Gersten, RC, Psak & Policy

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l (Igros Moshe YD 4:48) writes that there are those who say that bishul akum does not apply to food cooked in factories. Although he points out that this leniency does not have a clear basis, and cautions against relying on this, still he concludes that one need not protest against those who are lenient. The OU as well requires bishul Yisroel in factories. However, as we will see, Poskim will use factory cooking as a tziruf, when there are additional reasons not to require bishul Yisroel. Why does factory cooking play a role in whether a food must be bishul Yisroel?

One of the first to discuss this type of sevara was the Re'ah (Bedek Habayis 3:7). He writes that there was a minhag to be maikel to allow bread baked in the communal oven even though only non-Jewish workers were allowed to operate the oven. He explains that since the workers were obligated to run the ovens, it is more similar to an act of servitude than one of goodwill, and we are not concerned that this will lead to intermarriage. It is not clear if the Re'ah intended only to permit bread (pas akum) or other foods as well (bishul akum). Some Rishonim maintain that bread that belongs to a Yisroel that is baked by a non-Jew has the status of bishul akum. The Rashba (Mishmeres Habayis 3:7) understood that the Re'ah was also permitting bishul, but he thoroughly rejected his arguments. Later poskim, including the Beis Yosef (YD 113) side with the Rashba. Furthermore, the Rivash (524) writes that even the Re'ah only intended to permit bread; he never intended to permit bishul akum from hired workers. The halachos of bread (pas akum) are more kal than other foods (bishul akum). Chazal permitted additional leniencies for bread, since "al ha'lechem yichye ha'Adam".

Foods Cooked for Business

The Maharit Tzalon (161) writes that the heter of "pas palter" which permits bakery bread, can also be applied to certain cooked items. For example, he writes that roasted grains and peas may be purchased from a "palter" even though in his opinion they would be served "al shulchan melachim". He explains that only important foods (e.g. meat, fish...) that one would invite a guest to eat, would be forbidden if purchased from a palter, but not the side dishes which are not chashuv enough to warrant an invitation on their own, even though they too are served as part of the meal.

Some have understood the Maharit Tzalon to permit all factory-made foods and have pointed out that the ruling of Shulchan Aruch (YD 112:6) contradicts this leniency. Shulchan Aruch writes that even in places where the custom is to allow pas palter, one may not purchase a meat knish, because the meat would be bishul akum. Clearly, Shulchan Aruch is ruling that the heter of palter does not apply to bishul akum. However, this question is based on a mistake. As was explained, the Maharit Tzalon writes that important foods (e.g., a meat knish, that one would specifically invite their friend over to eat) are subject to the issur of bishul akum even if purchased from a palter. A meat knish would be bishul akum even according to the Maharit Tzalon.

The consensus of poskim is not to follow the leniency of the Maharit Tzalon. Still, some poskim including the Minchas Yitzchok (3:26 & 10:67) write that when there are other reasons, we can add the Maharit Tzalon as a tziruf as well. Rav Schachter explains that in regard to bishul akum, the minhag of poskim is to combine

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sevaros, even those that are not accepted on their own, to create k'ein a "sfek sfeika".

Canned Beans and Peas

The Rema (YD 113:2) writes that roasted beans and peas are not "oleh al shulchan melachim". The Aruch Hashulchan (113:16) questions whether this leniency is limited to roasted beans and peas, or whether it applies to boiled beans and peas as well. He cites the Rambam who is strict and the Terumas Hadeshen that implies it is permitted, and reasons that it is dependent on whether it is "oleh" in each location. Rav Belsky zt"l was of the opinion that in America cooked beans and peas are not oleh. Regarding factory-cooked canned beans and peas, one can be mitzaref the sevara of the Maharit Tzalon. Even if one were to argue that cooked beans and peas might be served as part of a fancy meal, still no one invites his friend over specifically to eat beans and peas.

Food Cooked in Modern Factories

Rivevos Efrayim (5:596) quotes Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l as saying some have argued that although we do not pasken like the Re'ah and the Maharit Tzalon, but food cooked in distant factories by anonymous workers where there is never a relationship between the workers and the consumers, is even more removed and should not be subject to bishul akum. Rav Moshe rejects this approach as well, because this too is still included in the gezeira; "lo plug". However, he suggests that if the factory were to cook the food in a unique manner that is inconsistent with how one would cook at home, then one cannot say "lo plug", and the food would be permitted. The OU poskim Rav Belsky zt"l and ybl"c Rav Schachter shlit"a have taken the position that one should only rely on this leniency together with other tzirufim. For example, when food is cooked with direct steam injection (kitur) or if the boilers are lit by a pilot light that was lit by a mashgiach (aish m'aish). Although these heteirim by themselves would only be relied on bidi'eved, but in a factory setting with specialized cooking equipment, one may rely on these heteirim even lichatchila.



ברוכים הבאים

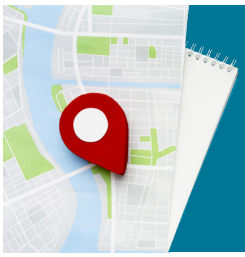
Welcome our newest Rabbinic Coordinator, **Rabbi Menachem Indich.** Rabbi Indich a talmid of Yeshiva of Staten Island, Telshe Cleveland, Rav Dovid Soloveitchk and BMG, and has learned in several community kolelim as well. He currently resides in Lakewood, NJ with his family and is the new rav of the Reserve Shul in Jackson, NJ. Rabbi Indich will be specializing in vitamins and supplements. He can be reached at (212) 613-0738 or menachem.indich@ou.org. We wish him much הצלחה in this new role.

Lifecycles

Condolences

המקום ינחם

To our administrative assistant, **Mrs. Yocheved Zuntz**, on the petirah of her husband Rav Shloma Zuntz, z"l.



ASK OU & Community Relations

Monsey, NY
Culinary Depot Kashrus Training

OU Kosher recently presented a special kashrus training program for approximately 40 members of the Culinary Depot sales and procurement team, with with a live webcast to other representatives around the globe.The presentation entitled, "The Kashrus of Equipment, Kashering and Other Relevant Halachos," provided practical insight into the kashrus considerations that arise in commercial kitchens and foodservice equipment.

The program was presented by Monsey-based RFR Rabbi Eliezer Stolzenberg and RC Rabbi Eli Gersten, with moderation by Rabbi Eli Eleff. The two-hour session provided an opportunity to discuss practical applications of kashrus and strengthen the relationship between OU Kosher and community members.





Brooklyn, NY
Keter Sion

Rabbi Yitzchok Gutterman presented at the Kollel of Keter Sion in Flatbush, NY on the Halachos of Industrial Kashering.



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