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**Rabbi Berel Wein**

**On Parshat Va’etchanan**

**By Rabbi Berel Wein**

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 The Shabbat immediately after the sad fast day of 9 Av is called Shabbat Nachamu – the Shabbat of comfort and consolation. This Shabbat draws its name from the first two words of the prophet Yeshayahu, and this series of prophetic readings continues for seven weeks with a message of hope and contentment.

 The prophetic readings leading up to the ninth of Av were only three in number, but the message of consolation is more than twice that in number. The prophet himself notes that the comforting message will be granted in a double manner (Nachamu Nachamu), and we receive seven weeks of comfort to counterbalance the three-week messages of doom and destruction.

 We are all aware that there are many varied and valid reasons and motives for Jewish customs and traditions. All of these customs regarding the readings of these specific Haftorot and the reasons for them should not be treated lightly, and one should not dismiss them in a cavalier fashion simply because it may no longer seem to be appropriate to the situation.

 Human life and behavior are too complex to attribute it to just one motive and reason. This is true regarding all details and aspects of Jewish tradition as well. There are ample examples in past and present Jewish society, how the abandonment of certain customs that modernists felt to be anachronistic eventually led to violations of explicit Torah commandments and values themselves. Judaism should never be observed and viewed in a simplistic***,*** superficial manner. It is too grand for such treatment.

**A Profound and Important Lesson**

 There is a profound and important lesson to be derived from the fact that the prophecies of destruction required only three weeks of public reading while the prophecies of hope and consolation mandated a seven-week period of time on the Jewish calendar. Destruction requires far less time and effort to achieve its sad and nefarious goal.

 When the end comes, it does so with inevitably and swiftness. Great empires and powerful countries can exist for centuries but are consigned into the dustbin of history in only a few decades or even a few years. It is so much faster and easier to slide down than to attempt to rise and rebuild and struggle forward.

 Rebuilding is a process, and it is never accomplished in an instantaneous and easy manner. There are many ups and downs that rebuilding will engender, disappointments, frustrations and even reversals. It will take much more time for the effort to comfort the Jewish people in its continuing effort to rebuild itself anew in its ancient homeland currently. The Jewish world was almost destroyed in a few years in the past century. It will take time to rebuild it. It is a continuing process along a very bumpy road.

 We should be comforted realizing that the process has begun and is underway. There are many weeks and years ahead of us, as we continue our quest to be comforted. But we are already blessed with the knowledge that we have reached the season of comfort and consolation.

*Reprinted from this week’s website of Rabbiwein.com*

**Tisha B’Av**

**The Footsteps of Moshiach**

By Rabbi Bentzion Shafier

Founder of TheSmuz.com



“After the first set of Shofar blasts, a second set is sounded – in order to confuse the *Soton*.” *Rosh HaShanah* 16b

 On Rosh HaShanah we are obligated to hear the Shofar. To fulfill the Torah requirement, thirty sounds are sufficient. Yet, Chazal (our sages) instituted an extra series, adding many more blasts.

 Tosfos explains why: The *Soton* counts the sounds, and after the required amount is reached, he begins to wonder. Why are they continuing to blow? It must be a different sounding of the Shofar. It must be the Shofar that is sounded when *Mosiach* is being heralded.

 The Soton is fully aware that when Mosiach arrives, he is no longer needed, and will be destroyed, so this premonition fills him with fear. He is so overwhelmed by dread, that he can no longer bring complaints against the Jewish people.

**Why Would the Soton Fall for This?**

 This Gemmerah is very difficult to understand. The *Mesillas Yehashrim* describes the *Soton* as a warrior learned in deceit. He is a wise and calculating moloch (angel) laying in wait to ensnare, man in sin. If so, how can the *Soton* fall for such an obvious trick? Doesn’t he realize that the same thing happened last year? Doesn’t he remember that the Jewish nation sounded the shofar and continued blowing, and *Mosiach* didn’t come? Why is the Soton overcome by fear?

 The answer to this question can be understood from a different perspective.

**Something Hidden Deep Beneath the Surface**

 When Albert Einstein was 5 years old and he was home sick in bed, an event was to occur that shaped the rest of his life. His father brought him a compass. He later described being so excited as he examined its strange powers that “he trembled and grew cold”.

 The fact that the magnetic needle behaved as if influenced by some hidden force rather than through the familiar mechanical method involving touch or contact produced a sense of wonder that motivated him throughout his life. As he later said, “Something deeply hidden, had to be behind things”. (Einstein, His Life and Universe)

 Albert Einstein at a tender young age understood that there are powerful forces that run this world. He later, went on to define and harness those incredible forces, and change mankind’s reality.

 In a similar sense the Soton is well aware of forces that HASHEM has Created. The Soton understands the power of a single mitzvah. He is acutely aware of the potency of Tshuvah. And he understands that which we don’t. That if the Jewish Nation would just reach up in one earnest pull to HASHEM, this long and bitter exile would come to a crashing halt. Life as we know it would cease to be, we would enter an ear of joy and happiness, peace and posterity, where everyman would see HASHEM.

 One of the reasons that we find it hard to await for Mosiach’s arrival, is because the concept is so distant, so foreign. After all of these years he hasn’t come, after all of the trials that we as a nation have been through he hasn’t redeemed us, what right do we have to assume that he’ll come now?

**The Soton Sees Things Clearly**

 That is the answer to the question: the Yeser Ha’rah doesn’t have a Yeser Ha’rah. The Soton isn’t bound within a body, so he isn’t blinded by physicality. As a result he sees with total clarity, and he understands things that we don’t. He perceives the power given to man, and he recognizes how close *Moshiach* is. In fact, he can’t believe that Mosiach isn’t here. After all of these years, after all of these troubles and trials. How is it possible that he hasn’t come?

 And so the Soton waits, waits with fear and trepidation, maybe this is the moment. Maybe this is the time when the Jewish Nation will recognize its power. And so when he hears the shofar blast he is filled with fear, not because he is foolish, but because he understands far better than we how close Mosiach is. He hears the footsteps of Mosiach.

 May this be the last year we commemorate Tisha B’ Av as a day of tragedy. May we spend the next Tisha B’Av celebrating in *Yerushalayim HaBenuiah* (Jerusalem rebuilt).

*Reprinted from this week’s website on TheShmuz.com This is an excerpt from the [Shmuz on the Parsha book](https://theshmuz.com/product/shmuz-on-the-parsha-book/).*

**The Importance of the Duality Of the Jew in Serving G-d**

**From the Talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Zt”l**



 This Shabbat, known as "Shabbat Nachamu," is the first of the seven "Sabbaths of Consolation." A special Haftora beginning "Console, console yourselves, My people" is read.

 Our Sages explain the twofold use of the word "console": "[The Jewish people] committed a twofold sin...received a twofold punishment... and are likewise comforted twofold." Elsewhere our Sages comment, "Because its mitzvot are doubled, so too are its consolations doubled."

**The Emphasis on the Number Two**

 Why this emphasis on the number two? How can a sin be twofold, anyway? Moreover, what is meant by the statement that the Torah's commandments are "doubled"?

 The terms "twofold" and "double," refer to two different dimensions. Everything in a Jew's life -- the Torah and its commandants, the destruction of the Holy Temple and our consolation -- reflects this duality, for everything in the world is composed of both a physical and a spiritual component.

 A Jew is a mixture of a corporeal body and spiritual soul, which together form a complete being. A Jew is considered whole when both aspects of his nature, body and soul, are working in tandem to serve G-d.

 Mitzvot, too, are composed of these two dimensions.

 Every mitzva contains a spiritual component -- the intentions behind it -- and a physical component -- the way the mitzva is performed.

 This is what our Sages referred to when stating that the Torah's mitzvot are "doubled"; similarly, the "twofold sin" committed by the Jewish people refers to the physical and spiritual aspects of their transgression.

**The Punishment was Both Spiritual and Physical**

 Accordingly, the punishment which followed -- the destruction of the Holy Temple -- was both spiritual and physical. Had the destruction been limited to the physical stones of the Temple, the G-dly light and revelation it brought into the world would have continued as before. However, the Jewish people "received a twofold punishment," and were chastised with a concealment of G-dliness as well.

 The Holy Temple itself reflected this duality. The Temple was a physical structure, possessing certain limited dimensions. Yet, the G-dly light with which it was illuminated was infinite in nature. Its destruction was therefore a double blow as it affected both of these aspects.

 When the Holy Temple is rebuilt in the Messianic era our consolation will be doubled because it will encompass both dimensions: not only will the physical structure of the Temple be restored, but its G-dly revelation will also return.

 This double measure of completion will be brought about by King Moshiach, who possesses a perfect "composite soul" containing all the souls of the Jewish people, and is therefore able to bring perfection to all creation.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Va’eschanan 5755 edition of the Lubavitch Youth Organization. Adapted from Sefer HaSichot of the Rebbe, Devarim 5750.Vol. 2.*

**Halacha**

**Is It Permissible to Pet**

**An Animal on Shabbat?**

**By Rabbi Eli Mansour**

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 Animals are Mukse. Therefore, it is prohibited to pick up a pet, such as a dog or a cat on Shabbat. The Poskim discuss whether it is permitted to pet the hair of an animal, without moving its body.

 The Be’ur Halacha (Rav Yisrael Meir Kagan of Radin, 1839-1933, 312:11) does not reach a firm conclusion, but he leans towards the position that the hair is different from the body of the animal, even though it is attached. Accordingly, it should be permitted to wipe one’s hands on the tail of a horse.

 Apparently, this distinction between the hair and the body is based on the fact that the whole reason the animal is Mukse is because it is prohibited from use on Shabbat. The prohibition of using an animal only applies to its body, and therefore the Mukse does as well.

 Just as there was no Gezerah-enactment prohibiting use of the hair, there was also no classification as Mukse. Nevertheless, practically it is difficult to separate between petting the hair and contact with the animal’s body.

 Hacham Yishak Beracha in his book on Mukse (p.86) brings both sides of the argument, but concludes that it is preferable to be strict and not pet animals. **SUMMARY**: Animals are Mukse, and it is best to refrain from petting them.

*Reprinted from the Matot-Masei 5780 Parshasheet of iTorah.com*

**The Importance of Answering Amen**

**By Rabbi David Ashear**



 The power of our words is enormous. A word of givingsomeone chizuk, a word of tefilla, a word of praise to Hashem. We have no concept of their true value. Rabbi Elyahu Lopian said it was worth it for Hashem to create this enormous world, with all the different galaxies and planets and stars, all for one Jew to say amen one time.

 That word amen, which might be taken for granted, is one of the most powerful words that we know of. The Zohar HaKadosh in parashat Vayelech speaks about how much abundance and goodness Hashem brings down to the world in the merit of each amen that we say.

 Saying amen properly, with kavana, could ward off decrees, it could even take away tzarot. The Gemara in Masechet Sanhedrin asks, from when is a little child zocheh to be called a ben Olam Haba? Rabbi Meir answered, when the child answers amen for the first time, and therefore, the Rema rules that parents should train their children from very young to

answer amen.

 The sefer Emunah Shelemah told a story about Rav Chaim of Volozhin who had a minhag to never say a beracha unless someone else was present to answer amen to it. The reason for his minhag is because it says in the Zohar,saying a beracha without someone answering is like having an unopened letter.

**One Time, Very Late at Night**

 One time, very late at night, while the Rabbi was learning, he was extremely thirsty, but everyone in his house was already sleeping and there was no one there to answer amen. Rav Chaim refrained from quenching his thirst, but after another half hour, he really needed to drink. He felt it was actually dangerous for his health to hold back anymore. Suddenly, there was a knock at the door.

 It was a student from his yeshiva who had a question on the Gemara he was learning. Rav Chaim was elated to see him. He asked the boy to please answer amen to his beracha. He drank the water and then he happily explained the answer to the boy’s question. The Rabbi made Boreh Nefashot, the student answered amen and went back to the dormitory.

 The next morning, Rav Chaim went over to that student to thank him again for coming so late and for being there to answer amen when he needed. The boy looked at the Rabbi in bewilderment. He said, “Rabbi, are you sure it wasn’t someone else? I didn’t come to your house last night.”

**A Special Angel**

 At that moment, Rav Chaim realized Hashem had sent him an angel that looked like that student, just like his Rabbi, the Vilna Gaon, used to merit to see angels. Rav Chaim did everything in his power to keep his kabbala of having someone answer amen to his berachot and, in that merit, Hashem sent him an angel to help him continue with it.

 Resh Lakish said in Masechet Shabbat, whoever answers amen with all of his strength and kavana will have the gates of Gan Eden open for him. The Sefer Chasidim writes, whoever is careful to say amen in this world will be granted the opportunity to say amen in the Next World.

 When we say amen to a beracha, we’re supposed to think, the words we just heard are the truth and we fully accept them. Every amen is extremely precious. We have dozens and dozens of opportunities every day to say it, in shul, at home, and during meals. We should train ourselves and our families to say all berachot out loud and give the zechut to all those around us to answer amen

*Reprinted from the Matot-Masei 5780 Parshasheet of iTorah.com*

**Now You See It,**

**Now You Don’t:**

***A Kosher View of Refined Edible Oils***

**By Rabbi Tzvi Rosen**



“שמן תורק שמך“ (*Shir Hashirim Rabah* 1:3) …”Your name is flowing like fine oil”. *Shir Hashirim Rabah* makes the following insightful observation.  *Shlomo Hamelech* compares *Bnei Yisroel* to fine oil. Just as fine oil is extracted from its source through crushing and squeezing, so do the innate qualities of *Bnei Yisroel* emerge as a result of our collective challenges and travails.

 Similarly, just as oil serves as a glowing source of radiance that fills a room with shining light, so does *Bnei Yisroel* serve as a light to other nations through their stellar performance of Torah and *mitzvos.*

 Oil is an incredibly remarkable and versatile product of *Hashem’s* creations and is not limited to olives, the quintessential source of *shemen.* Oil is found in a plethora of sources, and the means of oil extraction are varied.  Moreover, there are remarkable *halachic* ramifications with various oil extractions.  Let’s explore the wondrous world of oil.

 Oil can be obtained from various sources such as animals, vegetables, seeds and minerals. Today, edible oils are generally derived from vegetable sources; animal sourced edible oils are not as prevalent as they used to be. Oil can be classified into two categories: fixed and volatile.

 Fixed oil refers to oil that does not evaporate under normal conditions, while volatile or essential oil evaporates easily. Fixed oils are used in cooking and baking; essential oils are used in flavors. This article will discuss fixed oil extraction, and we will explore the *halachic* ramifications of grape seed oil and other vegetable oils.

 Vegetable oils are produced from a variety of sources. Seed oils (as referred to in Europe), which have become very popular, are produced from seeds such as soybeans, rapeseed (canola), sunflower, cottonseed, flaxseed and hemp. Believe it or not, cocoa butter which is extracted from cocoa beans is actually the seed oil that is found in a cocoa bean.

 Cocoa beans, the main ingredient in chocolate, are seeds or beans rich in oil or fat. Other vegetable oils, such as palm and coconut, are derived from the fruit pulp surrounding the seed of the fruit such as olives. Olive oil is derived from both the fruit and the seed (extra virgin olive oil, virgin olive oil and refined oil, as well as pomace oil).

**Methods of Edible Oil Extraction**

 There are various methods of vegetable oil extraction: i) cold pressing, which is the method of extracting extra virgin olive oil; ii) mechanical or expeller pressing, which is the method of extracting seed oil and cocoa butter; and iii) solvent extraction, which is the method of extracting grape seed oil, to be discussed later in this article.

**Grape Seed Oil Production**

 How is grape seed oil produced? According to the old adage, one man’s trash is another man’s treasure. This holds true even in the wine industry. After the grapes are harvested and crushed, what is to be done with the remaining seeds and pulp? One option is to throw them away. Another option is to put them to good use through the manufacturing of an array of marketable grape byproducts, e.g. grape skin extracts, grape concentrates, tannins, colors and grape seed oil.

 One country that is best suited for these grape byproduct productions is France, the home of thousands of vineyards. There is enough grape pulp produced to supply 22 French distilleries. These are companies that specialize in producing and manufacturing grape byproducts. It takes six months of non-stop work for a distillery to separate grape seeds from the skins and stems. Enough seeds are produced to keep the grape seed oil operation busy year-round, 24/7!

 In order to clearly understand the process and halachic ramifications of grape seed oil, it is important to follow a grape seed on its journey from the vine to the refinery.



 Due to an abundance of produce, and the advent of technological know-how, grapes are harvested in most cases with automatic harvesters that look like mechanical fingers. The harvesters collect the grapes and bring the truckload to the winery. Due to the aggressiveness of the automatic pickers, as well as the weight of the load, grape juice has already exuded from the fruit before the actual crushing takes place.

 When the grapes arrive, a sample of juice is taken from the load to measure its sugar content. The sugar content is critical for a winery to determine the adjustments that need to be made in the fermentation process in order to obtain the desired results. Then the grapes are crushed, allowing the grape juice to be pressed from the skins, stems and seeds. From this point on, the wine color, type or region of the production is customized to achieve the desired taste, fragrance and aroma of each variety of wine.

 The de-stemmed grapes are then broken down into three grape components: “must” (freshly pressed fruit juice [usually grape juice] that contains the skins, seeds, and stems of the fruit), pulp and skins. These components are then placed into fermentation vats. Fermentation is the natural process that converts the grape juice into wine.

 Naturally fermented wine does not require any additional ingredients, as the grape skins contain natural enzymes that effect the change. Natural yeast contained in the grape converts the sugar in the grape juice into alcohol and carbon dioxide gas. As the gas escapes, the juice bubbles violently (ferments). Some wineries produce red wines, while others produce white wines.

**Fundamental Difference Between the Red and White Wines**

 The fundamental difference between the red and white wines is the length of time the grape skins remain in the grape “must”. Grape skins that are left in the fermentation vats for a week to absorb the purple color produce red wine; white wine is produced from “must” that ferments without grape skins.

 The byproducts of the wine production – the grape skins, the grape seeds and the stems – are separated and sold to companies called distilleries. These companies process the grape byproducts into an array of products, including wine alcohol, grape skin extracts, colors, and tannins to name but a few. The grape seeds are a derivative of the byproduct and are transported to a variety of companies for further processing.

 In order for the distillery to retrieve the grape byproducts, the “marc” i.e. the seeds, stems, and skins need to be washed. The washing retrieves the remaining wine that was not pressed out at the winery, while cleaning the grape seeds in the process. Some distilleries use hot water at approximately 140° F, while others use ambient (room temperature) water.

 The seeds are then dried to approximately 8% moisture. Considering the fact that a kernel of rice contains 11% moisture, and wheat is harvested at approximately 14% moisture, suffice it to say that 8% is fairly dry. After drying, the seeds are ready to be sent to the extraction plant for further processing.

 It is mind boggling to observe the deliveries of grape seeds to an extraction facility. Trailer after trailer, measuring 15 ft high and 25 ft long, were loaded with dried grape seeds ready to be processed. The Bezier, France facility is the only grape seed oil extraction facility in France.

 It is supplied by the 22 distilleries that process the grape byproducts of this country that prides itself on its award winning wine production. Understandably, this facility works non-stop 365 days a year to produce crude grape seed oil. 8,000 tons of grape seeds are extracted from 50,000 tons of grape seeds!

**Mechanical Extraction**

 As previously noted, there are two methods of extracting crude oil. One technique is mechanical extraction, whereby the oil is pressed from the seed, bean or fruit. This method is used to produce cocoa butter and crude vegetable oils such as corn, soybeans and seed oils such as sunflower, flex and hemp.

**Chemical Extraction**

 Grape seed oil and pomace olive oil are removed through a process known as chemical extraction, using a solvent. The solvent, in this case hexane, is used to remove the edible oil from the grape seed or olive byproducts. How is this accomplished?

 The grape seeds undergo a process called laminating, which crushes the seeds in a roller and cuts them into pieces so that the surface area is exposed. The crushed seeds are injected with steam and then advance through an extruder. The pieces are then fused together and look like pieces of a black electrical cord or smooth sticks. The laminated grape seeds are then immersed in a bath of cascading hexane, which washes out the grape seed oil. The same process is used to extract crude pomace olive oil.

 The new combination of oil and hexane is then purified in a distillation still, similar to whiskey. The hexane boils off and is recaptured, leaving crude grape seed oil or pomace olive oil behind.



**Modern Crude Oil Refinery Plant**

**Refining Crude Oils**

 Refining is a six step process. First, the oil is neutralized with caustic soda and phosphoric acid. Second, the caustic and phosphoric process causes the waxes to set up. This allows the waxy soap stock and oil to be pulled apart through a process called separation. Next, the separated oil is washed and dried to burn off any excess water. Then, the oil is bleached with bleaching earth and activated carbon to remove any residual green color. The oil is then filtered and sent to a deodorizer to remove any odor.[1](https://www.star-k.org/articles/kashrus-kurrents/6516/now-you-see-it-now-you-dont-a-kosher-view-of-refined-edible-oils/#1) Finally, the result is a clear, ready-to-enjoy edible oil.

**The Bottom Line**

 A myriad of questions surround the *kashrus* of grape seed oil, starting from its inception. When the grapes come to the winery from the field, they have been sitting in juice which is the result of the automatic pickers and the weight of the grapes. Once a sample is drawn by the worker in the winery, it is eligible for a disqualifying *hamshacha.*[2](https://www.star-k.org/articles/kashrus-kurrents/6516/now-you-see-it-now-you-dont-a-kosher-view-of-refined-edible-oils/#2) A *hamshacha* results when an *aino Yehudi* desires to take some of the grape juice. According to *Ashkenazic* ruling, once the grape juice sample is drawn, the rest of the wine becomes *stam yayin*, or *yayin nesech* according to the *Sefardic* ruling.

 How does this impact the grape seeds? If the seeds are removed immediately and do not stay in the juice for 24 hours, then the seeds are not subject to the laws of *kevisha*. *Kevisha* is the disqualification of a kosher food item that is soaked in non-kosher liquid for 24 hours or vice versa. Red wine, however, would be subject to the laws of *kavush k’mevushal* due to the fact that the grape byproducts (the skins, seeds and stems) remain in the grape “must” for seven days.

 At the distillery, where the “marc” is washed in hot water and the seeds are separated, the hot water cooks the seeds in the wine residue. This would be the second disqualification.

**Two Criteria for Permitting Grape Seeds**

 The *Shulchan Aruch* discusses the two criteria for permitting grape seeds, *tammdan,* washing of the seeds and *yibush,* drying of the seeds to a point where the seeds are moistureless.[3](https://www.star-k.org/articles/kashrus-kurrents/6516/now-you-see-it-now-you-dont-a-kosher-view-of-refined-edible-oils/#3) This is similar to the drying of the wine sediments on the side of the cask (Weinstein), the basic ingredient of cream of tartar.[4](https://www.star-k.org/articles/kashrus-kurrents/6516/now-you-see-it-now-you-dont-a-kosher-view-of-refined-edible-oils/#4)

 In the distillery, the seeds are definitely washed and dried well. This is critical because if a wet seed were to become moldy, the oil would not be able to be extracted. Furthermore, prior to extraction the seeds are dried once again during lamination. The question remains: Does a seed that has originally been soaked and cooked in non-kosher wine prior to washing, drying, and re-drying qualify as kosher grape seed oil?

 The *Shulchan Aruch* clearly states that grape seeds are forbidden to be used within the first 12 months of their separation from the “must”. Furthermore, the *halachah* states that the seeds must be washed and free of any residual wine before the 12 month count can be successful. Moreover, does the drying of the seeds equal a 12 month waiting period? Similarly, the question was raised regarding the wine sediment which is the main ingredient of cream of tartar. Does the drying of the wine lees, the wine sediment, qualify for the 12 month waiting period? Many authorities maintain that it does.

 Another opinion in favor of grape seed oil is that the oil bears no resemblance to the original grape seed in smell, taste, color or texture.[5](https://www.star-k.org/articles/kashrus-kurrents/6516/now-you-see-it-now-you-dont-a-kosher-view-of-refined-edible-oils/#5) The *Chasam Sofer* rules that since there is a complete transformation from grape seeds to oil, the prohibition of disqualified grape seeds does not apply. This is based upon the ruling of *Rabbeinu Yona*, who maintained that a forbidden item that has undergone a complete transformation is permitted.

 Moreover, the *Pischei Teshuva* which quotes the *Chasam Sofer* adds that an additional caveat to permit grape seed oil is that the lamination dries the seeds to a point that qualifies for fuel after the hexane is poured onto the cut seeds. The *Chelkas Yaakov* offers yet another reason to permit grape seed oil. Oil is contained inside the seed, and the wine is not converted into oil; therefore, it can be viewed as two separate entities. It is the opinion of STAR-K, as well as other major *kashrus* agencies, to permit grape seed oil that is manufactured in this manner.

**Kitniyos Shenishtanu**

 It is interesting to note with regard to *Pesach,* there is a divergence of opinions amongst *kashrus* certification agencies as to whether we permit or forbid *Kitniyos Shenishtanu*.

 Today, food science has found multiple applications for products derived from *kitniyos.* These *kitniyos* conversions and fermentations have given rise to a new *kashrus* term, “*Kitniyos Shenishtanu*”, *kitniyos* that have been transformed into a new product.

 These converted food grade ingredients include citric acid and ascorbic acid (that have wide food applications), NutraSweet sweetener, MSG (a flavor agent in soups and spice blends), sodium citrate (found in processed cheeses), sodium erythorbate (found in deli meats), and lactic acid that is used in olive production. These corn or soy-based ingredients go through a multi-stage conversion process until the final food grade material is produced.

 What is the reasoning for those who permit *Kitniyos Shenishtanu*? Interestingly, the reasoning behind permitting *Kitniyos Shenishtanu* is based on a different *halachic* query regarding a serious *kashrus* concern as to whether or not a product extracted and converted from a non-kosher source could be considered kosher. The *heter* is based on the reasoning of the *Chasam Sofer* and the *Chok Yaakov* permitting the consumption of grape seed oil that was extracted from non-kosher grape seeds.[6](https://www.star-k.org/articles/kashrus-kurrents/6516/now-you-see-it-now-you-dont-a-kosher-view-of-refined-edible-oils/#6)

 The fundamental reasoning of the *Chasam Sofer* and the *Chok Yaakov* permitting the newly transformed grape seed oil provides the basis for permitting *Kitniyos Shenishtanu*.

 The reasons for permitting *Kitniyos Shenishtanu* are very compelling. What are the counter arguments in favor of prohibiting *Kitniyos Shenishtanu*? When Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, *shlit”a*, Rabbinic Administrator of the STAR-K, discussed this issue with Rabbi Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv, *zt”l*, and Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, *zt”l*, their position was to prohibit *Kitniyos Shenishtanu* as a *Chumra d’Pischa*, a strict adherence to the *minhag* of prohibiting *Kitniyos.* For this reason, it is STAR-K policy not to certify products containing *Kitniyos Shenishtanu*.

 It is indeed a great manifestation of the *Ribbono Shel Olam’s* masterful handiwork to see the mysteries that can be found in nature, and the versatility of the fruits of *Hashem’s* labor.

(1) Most refineries today have moved away from deodorizing animal fats on the same deodorizers. A deodorizer is a tall cylindrical column that essentially ‘cooks’ the oil to remove any off-putting smell.  it can be likened to a closed column of multi-level frying pans, almost impossible to *kasher.*  if a refinery is A/V (animal /vegetable), any kosher edible oil deodorized on this common deodorizer would be *treif.*

*(2)Yoreh Deah* (Y.D.) 123:17

(3) Y.D. 123:14

(4) Y.D. 123:16

*(5) Pischei Teshuva* (Y.D.) 123:20

(6) It is interesting to note that the *shaila* was raised by the *gadol hador*, *Harav* Aharon Leib Shteinman, *zt”l*, in Europe during WWII, where kosher oil was scarce and the only oil available was grape seed oil.

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