

Instructors: Rabbis Dennis Beck-Berman and Victor Gross

SYLLABUS

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Course objectives include familiarizing students with traditional kashrut terminology and practice, the basic differences between Orthodox, Conservative, and Renewal standards (there is a range in each stream), the issues involving *Shabbat* and *Yom-Tov* (especially Passover) food preparation, and alternative diets (vegan, ovo-lacto vegetarian, macrobiotic, etc.). Students will learn how to make a congregation/caterer/summer camp kitchen truly kosher from a traditional halakhic perspective and within the psycho-halakhah of Jewish renewal. We will discuss the required readings in 13 one-hour teleconferences from January thru June. The practicum, where participants intern by koshering a kitchen, will take place June 25-29, 2007, in Albuquerque, NM, preceding the ALEPH Kallah.

REGISTRATION

Register by January 12, 2007.

Send the information below to BeckBerman@aol.com. There is a minimum enrollment of 4 students.

- 1) Name
- 2) Address
- 3) City, State, Zip (& Country – if not US)
- 4) Telephone (the one(s) preferred for course communications)
- 5) Email (the one(s) preferred for course communications)
- 6) Indicate: Rabbi/Semikhah student/other (briefly explain interest)
- 7) Related experience (if any)

TUITION

Tuition is \$500, which includes a \$100 non-refundable fee.* Cancellations are subject to one half of the total fee if received before February 15; and forfeit total fees if received after February 15.

* NOTE: Students who dropped out of a previous session of this course may receive credit for the non-refundable fee they paid.

COSTS

In addition to tuition, students are expected to pay for the required texts (about \$150), teleconference telephone charges (for those who do not have access to free long-distance service), and their personal costs for transportation and meals at the Practicum in Albuquerque, NM; we will try to provide lodging or home hospitality.

PAYMENT

Mail a check (made out to “Dennis Beck-Berman”) to:
Rabbi Dennis Beck-Berman, 1914 Cumberland Avenue, Petersburg, VA 23805

CREDIT

Participants who successfully complete the course requirements may receive credit with the ALEPH Rabbinic Program. In addition, participants who demonstrate a mastery of the theoretical and practical aspects of *hashgachah* as well as a living commitment to kashrut will receive certification as an eco-kosher mashgiach. A “living commitment to kashrut” means a level of personal observance which at minimum is similar to the most lenient standards of the Conservative Movement.

REQUIRED TEXTS

You can purchase most texts online. Try Amazon.com or www.levinejudaica.com (or 1-800-5-JEWISH).

Avrohom Blumenkrantz, *The Laws of Pesach: A Digest*. Gross Bros., 2006 (or previous edition; this book is published annually about a month before Passover).

Davida G. Breier & R. Mangels, *Vegan & Vegetarian FAQ*. Vegetarian Resource Group, 2001.

Yehoshua Cohen, *The Laws of Meat and Milk*. English Translation and Commentary of Abraham Danzig, *Chochmas Adam*, §§40-50. New York, 1991.

Eliezer Eidlitz, *Is It Kosher?* 3rd edition. Feldheim, 1995.

Peter Singer and Jim Mason, *The Way We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter*. Rodale Books, 2006.

Lisè Stern, *How to Keep Kosher*. William Morrow/Harper Collins, 2004.

Arthur Waskow, *Down-To-Earth Judaism: Food, Money, Sex, And The Rest Of Life*. William Morrow, 1995.

COURSE HANDOUTS

Registered students will receive extensive course reading materials (distributed electronically) prepared by the Instructor and viewable in Adobe Acrobat Reader. Students are welcome to print these materials as desired.

LEGAL NOTICE

Nearly all the materials in the course readers are taken from websites, but are protected by copyright. These copies constitute educational fair use and are intended for the students of this course. Not only do some websites require special access, but providing only the links to these materials would seriously interfere with class discussion of the material, burden students, and complicate student research. STUDENTS MAY NOT DISTRIBUTE THESE DOCUMENTS TO OTHERS. Students may, of course, make use of these materials for their own personal use, or for any other legal purpose.

PROCEDURES

Teleconferences

Students will discuss the required readings in 13 one-hour teleconferences from January thru June.

Practicum

During the practicum, June 26-29, 2007, participants intern by koshering the kitchen at the University of New Mexico, in Albuquerque, NM, before the ALEPH Kallah. Plan to arrive by Monday evening, June 25, as class begins on Wednesday morning at 9:00 AM. There will be daily lectures and discussions. During the Kallah (and pre-Kallah weekend), students will intern as a *mashgi'ach* for several meals. There will be a final written and oral examination.

Participation

There are four elements of participation for teleconferences and the Practicum:

Attendance: Regular attendance at all teleconferences and classes is essential. Excused absences must be approved by the Instructor. It is up to the student to find out what was missed during any absence and to make up any missed work.

Preparation: Read assignments in advance of class.

Contribution: Contribute to class discussion. Insightful questions are also important. If you don't understand something — ASK!

Readings

Students are responsible for assigned readings in the required texts and class handouts (electronically distributed materials).

Evaluation

Grading will be based on the following: Participation (25%), Final Written Examination (50%), Final Oral Examination (25%),

Grading Scale

90 - 100 = A; 80 - 89 = B; 70 - 79 = C; 60 - 69 = D

INSTRUCTORS

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Rabbi Dennis Beck-Berman is the spiritual leader of Congregation Brith Achim in Petersburg, VA. He is a Past President of OHALAH: Association of Rabbis for Jewish Renewal and has served as *mashgiach* of the ALEPH Kallah for nearly a decade. Rabbi Beck-Berman received *semikhah* from Rabbi Zalman Shachter-Shalomi in 1983. Reb Zalman taught him the art of hashgachah while kashering the kitchen at Fellowship House Farm for P'nai Or retreats.

Rabbi Victor Gross is co-rabbi of congregation Pardes Levavot in Boulder, CO. He is a member of the ALEPH Rabbinic Board of Academic Advisors (*Vaad*) and teaches Jewish History and thought. Reb Victor learned *hashgachah* in the JTS Rabbinical School and has been the *mashgiach* for Ruach HaAretz and Ohalah.

ASSIGNMENTS

NOTE: Do not try to memorize every halakhic detail in Eidlitz and other traditionally oriented materials. Focus on understanding the issues that are most commonplace and gain a familiarity with the range of complex issues involved in kashrut today.

Teleconference #1: Kashrut Basics (January)

Lisè Stern, *How to Keep Kosher*. (read all except last chapter on recipes)

Eco-Kosher Reader 1:

Isaac Klein, *Guide to Jewish Religious Practice*, Chapter 26, The Dietary Laws (VI): Shehitah. [<http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/diduknow/jrpguide/>]. (113-120)

Yitzchak Abadi, "Jewish Law – Kashering." [<http://www.kashrut.org/halacha/?law=Kashering>]. (70-71)

Eco-Kosher Reader 2:

Steven Ross Weintraub, "Chelm.org's Kashrut Class." [<http://www.chelm.org/jewish/kashrut/all.html>].

Teleconference #2 & 3: Kashrut Basics (February)

Eliezer Eidlitz, *Is It Kosher?* (NOTE: only browse sections on meat and 32-44, 74-80, 96-105, 169-188, 206-220)

Eco-Kosher Reader 1:

Eliezer Eidlitz, "Food Products That Do NOT Require Certification." [<http://www.kosherquest.com/>]. (123-124)

"What do the different OU symbols mean?" [<http://oukosher.org/index.php/faqs/>] (78-80)

Eco-Kosher Reader 2:

Eliezer Eidlitz, "Some Reliable Certifications: Reliable Kosher Symbols." [<http://www.kosherquest.org/index.asp?theaction=symbols>].

Eliezer Eidlitz, "History of Kosher Supervision." [<http://www.kosherquest.org/index.asp?theaction=symbols>].

Va'ad HaRabanim of Greater Seattle, "List of Common Acceptable Kosher Symbols." [<http://www.seattlevaad.org/KosherSymbols.html>].

Kassel Aelson, "Is a K Kosher?" Responsa of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly, 1993.

Teleconference #4 & 5: Eco-Kosher (February-March)

Peter Singer and Jim Mason, *The Way We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter*.

Arthur Waskow, *Down-To-Earth Judaism: Food, Money, Sex, And The Rest Of Life*. Part 1: Food. See especially chapters 5 and 11.

Eco-Kosher Reader 1:

“The Eco Kosher Network.” [<http://www.ecojew.com/ecokashrut/>]. (2-4)

Terry Gips, “Eco-Kosher: Can I Care About the Earth and Still Eat My Lox, “Bagels and Cream Cheese?” [<http://www.mtn.org/iasa/kosher.htm>]. (8-15)

Anya McCoy, “Eco-Kosher and Feng Shui.” [<http://member.newsguy.com/~herblady/ecokoshe.htm>]. (15-18)

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, “World Wisdom: Recalibrating the Mind to Serve the Emerging Spirit.” [<http://www.naropa.edu/distance/index.htm>]. (22-23)

Akiva Gersh, “*L'avdah u'l'shamra*: A Jewish Obligation to Protect the Environment.” [<http://www.ecojew.com/avdah/contents.html>]. (30-39)

“Organic Consumers Association Eco-Kosher Campaign.” [<http://www.organicconsumers.org/ecokosher/>]. (113)

Yitzhak Husbands-Hankin, “Justice at the Checkout Counter.” *Tikkun* 19:3 (May/June 2004). (66-67)

Eco-Kosher Reader 2:

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, “Eco Kosher.” Lectures on April 1 and April 15, 1998.

Anonymous, “Yoreh Yoreh in Hilchot Eco-Kosher: Semicha For A Small Planet.” (I respect the author’s request that the proposal remain confidential).

Teleconference #6, 7 & 8: Halakhic Sources (March)

Abraham Danzig, *Chochmas Adam*, §§40-50. Translation and Commentary by Yehoshua Cohen, *The Laws of Meat and Milk*. [on *Shulkhan Arukh, Yoreh Deah*, §§87-97] (NOT sections 41, 50).

Source Reader:

Babylonian Talmud, *Pesachim* 30b; *Chullin* 96b-99b; *Avodah Zarah* 75b-76b.

[Students are encouraged to study on their own the passages provided from the Rambam, *Mishneh Torah, Shulkhan Arukh, Yoreh Deah* (especially §§103, 106, 108, 115, 121, 122), and Solomon Ganzfried, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law*, trans. by Hyman E. Goldin, rev. ed., New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1961), chapters 46, 116.]

Teleconference #9 & 10: Eco-Kosher (April)

Davida G. Breier & R. Mangels, *Vegan & Vegetarian FAQ*. Chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 11 & 12 (skip unrelated issues)

Eco-Kosher Reader 1:

Zecharyah Tzvi Goldman, “Organic Food” in “Judaism & the New Age: Halakhic Perspectives.” [<https://sslngn.net/devikut/orders.html> now <http://www.integrativetorahstudies.com/halakha.html>] (64-66)

Teleconference #9 & 10: Eco-Kosher (April-May) [continued]

Francine Stevens and Betsy Lydon, "The 10 Most Important Foods to Buy Organic." *E: The Environmental Magazine* (Sept-Oct, "1997). [<http://www.emagazine.com/view/?984>]. (67-69)

Charles W. Moore, "Macrobiotics: A Guide for the Perplexed." *Natural Life Magazine* 38. [<http://www.life.ca/nl/38/macro.html>]. (111-112)

Dara Colwell, "Jews for 'GE-less' Ethical concerns are prompting some local members of the Jewish community to go against the genetically engineered grain." [<http://www.metroactive.com/papers/metro/02.22.01/ge-kosher-0108.html>]. (43-45)

Steven M. Druker, "Are Genetically Engineered Foods in Accord With Jewish Law?" [<http://www.ogmdangers.org/enjeu/philosophique/religion/Halakha.html>]. (45-53)

"What is the OU's position regarding genetic engineering?" [<http://oukosher.org/index.php/faqs/>] (72)

Eco-Kosher Reader 2:

Notes on "Green" chemical kashering (conversation with Gershon Steinberg-Caudill, the "Eco-Kosher Rebbe")

Avraham I. Reisner, "Curiouser and Curiouser: Teshuvah on Genetic Engineering." *Conservative Judaism* 52:3 (Spring 2000), 59-72. [summary: <http://pewagbiotech.org/buzz/display.php3?StoryID=54>].

Temple Grandin and Joe M. Regenstein, "Religious Slaughter and Animal Welfare: A Discussion for Meat Scientists." *Meat Focus International* (March 1994), 115-123. [<http://www.grandin.com/ritual/kosher.slaugh.html>].

Aaron Gross, "When Kosher Isn't Kosher." *Tikkun* 20:2 (Mar/Apr 2005), 52-55. [<http://www.jewishveg.com/media11.html>]

Teleconference #11 & 12: Halakhic Issues (May)

Avrohom Blumenkrantz, *The Laws of Pesach: A Digest*. Chapter 3, sections A-E and especially G; ch. 10, sections A-B, browse D (242-298); 10-309 f. (foam cups); ch. 12 section E; for fun see 26-572 ff. (home remedies)

Eco-Kosher Reader 1:

David Mitnick, "A Mashgiach's Job is Never Done." [<http://www.star-k.com/cons-kash-articles.htm>]. (80-81)

Avy Meyers, "The Changing Face of Kashruth in the Light of Modern Technology: An interview with Sholem Fishbane" [<http://www.crcweb.org/kosher/consumer/articles/jewishchicago.html>]. (103-106)

Sholem Fishbane, "Daily Dumping Sheets - and Kosher?" [<http://www.crcweb.org/kosher/consumer/articles/Fdryfruit.html>]. (108-109)

Dovid Heber, "The Guide To Halachic Food Measurements." [<http://www.star-k.com/kashrus/kk-issues-measurements.htm>]. (99-100)

David Golinkin, "Eating Kitniyot (Legumes) on Pesach (OH 453:1)." [www.ResponsaForToday.com]. (42-43)

Caroline Pyevich, "Sugar and other sweeteners: Do they contain animal products?" *Vegetarian Journal* 16:2 (March/April 1997). [<http://www.vrg.org/journal/vj97mar/973sugar.htm>]. (53-55)

Zusha Blech, "Is it Butter, or is it ... Something Else?" OU Daf Hakashrus Online. [<http://www.ou.org/kosher/daf/advanced/butter.html>]. (69-70)

Arlene J. Mathes-Scharf, "Yogurt." [<http://www.kashrut.com/articles/Yogurt/Yogurt>]. (70)

Teleconference #11 & 12: Halakhic Issues (May-June) [continued]

Yitzchak Abadi, "Passover." [http://www.kashrut.org/halacha/?law=PassoverKashrut.org]. (71-72)

"Must tofu bear certification?" OU FAQs. [http://oukosher.org/index.php/faqs/] (72-73)

"Do vitamins require certification?" OU FAQs. [ibid.] (73)

"Are there any online kosher supermarkets?" OU FAQs. [ibid.] (73)

"What are the kosher concerns, if any, related to sugar?" OU FAQs. [ibid.] (73-74)

"Do oral medications need to be kosher?" OU FAQs. [ibid.] (74)

"How is cheese made, and why does it need a Hachsher if all milk is kosher?" OU FAQs. [ibid.] (75-76)

"How should open leaf lettuce be checked for bugs?" OU FAQs. [ibid.] (76)

"What does the term 'Glatt Kosher' mean?" OU FAQs. [ibid.] (78)

Moshe Heinemann, "Oven kashrus: For Everyday Use." [http://www.star-k.com/kashrus/kk-cooking-oveneveryday.htm]. (81-82)

Avrohom Mushell, "Oven kashrus: For Shabbos Use." [http://www.star-k.com/kashrus/kk-cooking-ovenshabbos.htm]. (82-84)

Avrohom Mushell, "Oven kashrus: For Yom Tov Use." [http://www.star-k.com/kashrus/kk-cooking-ovenyomtov.htm]. (84-88)

Tzvi Rosen, "Vegetables: Can It Be Kosher?" [http://www.star-k.com/kashrus/kk-vegetables-can.htm]. (88-90)

Dovid Heber, "Kashrus In Good Taste: Kosher Certifying the Flavor Industry." [http://www.star-k.com/kashrus/kk-palate-taste.htm]. (90-92)

Dovid Heber, "Vitamins, "Nutritionals & Homeopathic Remedies: Kashrus and Halachic Guidelines." [http://www.star-k.com/kashrus/kk-medi-guide.htm]. (92-94)

Avrohom Mushell, "Getting into the Thick of Things – Gelatin." [http://www.star-k.com/kashrus/kk-palate-gelatin.htm]. (94-97)

Moshe Heinemann, "The Mitzvah of Separating Challah." [http://www.star-k.com/kashrus/kk-issues-challah.htm]. (97-98)

Sholem Fishbane, "Dried Fruits." [http://www.crcweb.org/kosher/consumer/articles/Fdryfruit.html]. (106-108)

Tzvi Rosen, "Can It Be Kosher? Canned Vegetables and Fruit." [http://www.crcweb.org/kosher/consumer/articles/R-canning.html]. (109-111)

Eco-Kosher Reader 2:

Barry Leff, "Eating Dairy Meals in Unsupervised Restaurants." [http://jacksonsnnyder.com/arc/Midrash/dairyteshuvav3.htm].

Elimelech David Ha-Levi, "Passover Preparation." (selections). [http://2-passover.tripod.com/passoverpreparation.html].

Kassel Aelson, "Preparing and Serving Food on Shabbat." Responsa of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly, 1988.

Kassel Abelson, "The Kashrut of Mono- and Di-Glycerides." Responsa of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly, 1982.

Teleconference #13: Practical Issues (June)

Eco-Kosher Reader 1:

Congregation Or Shalom (Vancouver, “ Canada), “Guide to Kiddush and Kitchen, “Kiddush, “Kitchen & Kashrut.” [<http://www.orshalom.ca/do-kiddush2.html>]. (23)

Eco-Kosher Reader 2:

Dennis Beck-Berman, “Kallah Kashering Notes.” 2005.

Dennis Beck-Berman, “YOCA Kashering Notes.” 2005.

Howard Handler, “On Kashering Glass Vessels.” Responsa of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly, 1990.

Kassel Abelson, “May Glass Cookware be Kashered?” Responsa of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly, 1990. (NB Addenda 1-3)

Kassel Abelson, “Can Utensils Lined With Teflon or Silverstone Be Kashered?” Responsa of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly, 1991.

District of Columbia Energy Office, *Green Faith Guide*. 2004. Chapters 6-9. [<http://www.gwipl.org/documents/dcGreenFaithGuide.pdf>]

American Plastics Council, “Resin Identification Codes – Plastic Recycling Codes.” [http://www.americanplasticscouncil.org/s_apc/sec.asp?TRACKID=&CID=313&DID=931].

Federal Trade Commission, “Facts for Consumers: Sorting Out ‘Green’ Advertising Claims.” [www.newdream.org/procure/sortgrn.pdf].

George Pollak, “Synagogue Policy Concerning Bringing Foods Prepared in the Home Into the Synagogue.” Responsa of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly, 1988.

“Test Your Kosher IQ.” [<http://www.theologyweb.com/forum/archive/index.php/t-48462.html>].

“Test Your Kosher IQ - Answers.” [<http://www.shemayisrael.com/kosherkitchen/kans3.htm>].

Kassel Abelson, “Preparing and Serving Food on Shabbat.” Responsa of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly, 1988.

Lori Palatnik, “Your Handy Guide to Prepare and Organize for a Spectacular Shabbat.” Adapted from Lori Palatnik, *Friday Night and Beyond* (Jason Aronson). [http://www.aish.com/shabbathowto/beforeshabbat/Shabbat_Checklist_and_Basic_Laws.asp].

Daniel Schloss, “Hilchot Shabbat Test #4 - Melacha 11: Cooking and Baking.” [http://www.aish.com/shabbatlaws/selfstudycourse/Hilchos_Shabbos_-_Test_4.asp].

Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel, “Guide to Benei Mitzva Observance.” Sixth Edition, 2003-2004. (selections). [<http://www.beki.org/bmitzva.pdf>].

Yosef Gavriel Bechhofer, “Halachos of Shabbos Goyim (non-Jews).” [<http://www.aishdas.org/rygb/goyim.htm>].

Joe M. Regenstein and Carrie E. Regenstein, “Looking In on Kosher Supervision of the Food Industry” in *Some Current Aspects of Kashrut - Law and Practice: a Symposium. Judaism* 39:4 (1990), 408-426.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER READING

In addition to materials in the course Readers and bibliographies in the required texts.

Nilton Bonder, *The Kabbalah of Food*. Shambhala, 1998.

Samuel H. Dresner, *Keeping Kosher: A Diet for the Soul*. Revised edition by David M. Pollock. (Rabbinical Assembly, 2000)

Binyomin Forst, *The Laws of Kashrus*. (2nd edition; Mesorah/Artscroll, 2002)

Arthur Green, "Vegetarianism: A Kashrut for Our Age" in Arthur Waskow, ed., *Torah of the Earth: Exploring 4,000 Years of Ecology in Jewish Thought. Volume 2: Zionism: One Land, Two Peoples; Eco Judaism: One Earth, Many Peoples*. Jewish Lights, 2000, 204-206.

Chaim Jachter, "The Gevinat Akum Prohibition, Parts I and II." [<http://www.koltorah.org/ravj/13-10%20Gevinat%20Akum%20-%20Part%20I.htm>].

Kashrut Department of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues, "Pesach Guide 2004." (selections). [<http://www.uos.co.za/Kashrut/pesach.doc>].

Isaac Klein, *Responsa and Halakhic Studies*. Ktav, 1975. Chapters 6-11.

Yacov Lipschutz, *Kashruth*. 2nd ed. Mesorah/Artscroll, 2001.

Some Current Aspects of Kashrut - Law and Practice; a Symposium. *Judaism* 39:4 (1990). See especially Marc D. Stern, "Kosher food and the law"; Menachem Genack, "Industrial kashrut supervision"; Gedalia Dov Schwartz, "Kashruth: problems and solutions".

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi with Joel Segal, *Jewish With Feeling: A Guide to Meaningful Jewish Practice*. Riverhead Books, 2005. (see Chapter 5, *A New Kind of Kosher*)

Miryam Z. Wahrman, *Brave New Judaism*. Brandeis U. Press, 2002.

Sara Epstein Weinstein, *Piety and Fanaticism: Rabbinic Criticism of Religious Stringency*. Jason Aronson, 1997.

Yehuda Wiesen, *Guide to Practical Halacha and Home Ritual For Conservative Jews*. Revised. August 11, 2004. [<http://mahadash.com/docs/wiesen/halacha.htm>].