And the answer is…

Vayigash 5782

1. **With all of the food shortages around the world, clearly there is a need to think about being resourceful and not wasteful. I recently learned about an organization called LEKET in Israel that collects all of the leftover food from weddings and restaurants and brings them to the poor. It got me thinking that perhaps we could do the same for Shiva homes – there always seems to be an abundance of food in those places. Is there anything wrong with taking the food from a Shiva home?**

This issue does not appear in Shulchan Aruch or Talmud at all. Truth is, it first seems to come to light in the writings of Rabbi Akiva Eiger:

**רבי עקיבא איגר יורה דעה סימן שעו סעיף ד**

נוהגין שלא ליקח דבר קטן וגדול מבית אבל כל משך ז' ימי אבילות משום שרוח הטומאה שורה שם כל ז'.

Rav Willig Shlita quoted the Tzitz Eliezer who noted that this was limited only to when you are in the home that the person passed in. A standard Shiva home where Aveilim happen to be sitting Shiva would not be a part of this ruling.

So is this true l’Halacha?

* Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach –

**שו"ת מנחת שלמה תניינא (ב - ג) סימן צט**

כתב בחי' רעק"א יו"ד סי' שע"ו סעי' ד' נוהגין שלא ליקח דבר קטן וגדול מבית האבל כל משך ז' ימי אבילות משום שרוח הטומאה שורה שם כל ז', עכ"ד. ונראה דבצירוף עם זה שכתב בס' יוסף אומץ דף קס"ב ששמע ממורו הגאון מוהר"ר סגל ז"ל שכל המנהג הזה הוא בטעות ואין לו שום עיקר עיין שם, נלענ"ד דעכ"פ יש להקל ולא לחשוש אלא בדברים שהם ממש מיוחדים לשימוש בבית האבל, ולא במעות שעומדים להוצאה ולזוז אותם מהבית, וכ"ש בתשלום של שכר שכיר או צדקה ופרעון חוב דאין שום מקום לחשוש ושומר מצוה לא ידע דבר רע.

Seems to be an issue of Ruach Tumah – and may even be a mistake! No need for concern.

* Rav Ovadiah Yosef

**שו"ת יביע אומר חלק ד - יורה דעה סימן לה**

ד. מה שנוהגים שלא ליקח שום דבר מבית האבל תוך שבעת הימים, כתב בלחם הפנים (סי' שעו דס"ז ע"ג), שהטעם לזה, מפני שרוח הטומאה שורה שם ז' ימים, וישראל קדושים הם ולא יטמאו בכל אלה. ע"כ. וכ"כ בבית לחם יהודה שם. ובאליה רבה (סי' רכד סק"ז). ובחי' רעק"א יו"ד (סי' שעו). ע"ש. אבל בס' יוסף אומץ יוזפא (עמוד של) כ' וז"ל, קבלתי ממורי הגאון מהר"ח סג"ל ז"ל שמה שנוהגים שלא ליקח מבית האבל שום דבר תוך שבעה, אין לו שום עיקר בעולם. ואמר שטעות זה בא ממ"ש הפוסקים [ביו"ד סי' שמ סל"ה וע' בש"ך ובשבט יהודה שם] המשאיל חלוק לחבירו לילך בו לבית האבל אינו רשאי ליטלו ממנו עד שיעברו ימי האבל. עכ"ל. וכ"כ בס' נוהג כצאן יוסף, והובא בשו"ת חיים ביד (סי' קכה אות טוב). ע"ש. **ולהכי אמרינן מאן דלא קפיד לא קפדי בהדיה**.

Sounds like if you do not get concerned, the law does not tell you to be concerned.

* Rav Menashe Klein, Ungvarer Rav

**שו"ת משנה הלכות חלק ז סימן רו**

בדבר אשר שמע שיש הקפדה אצל כמה גדולים שלא ליקח דבר מבית האבל האם צריך לחשוש לדבריהם. הנה הקפדה זו לאו מכמה גדולים הוא אלא דבר זה מפורש בא"ר א"ח סי' רכ"ד סק"ז ובלחה"פ סימן שע"ו שנהגו שאין לוקחין דבר גדול וקטן מבית האבל כל ז' ימי אבלו והטעם משום דרוח הטומאה שורה ז' ימים וישראל קדושים הם ולא מטמאין באלה והביאם במשמרת שלום אות מנהג וח"ו לנו לפקפק על מנהגי ישראל דגדול המנהג ועי' ח"ס א"ח סימן נ"א דהמפקפק על מנהגים צריך בדיקה אחריו. עכ"פ דבר זה מבואר בפוסקים.

Sounds like you need to care about minhagim.

* Rav Moshe Feinstein

**שו"ת אגרות משה יורה דעה חלק ב סימן קסח**

הנה בדבר מה שבמדינה זו יש שמביאין להאבלים בימי השבעה חבילות של מיני אוכלין ומשקין וכתר"ה כותב שיש לאסור מתרי טעמי א' מדין האיסור לשלח מנות לאבל אף כל י"ב חדש וכ"ש בימי השבעה וב' מצד שהוא מנהג העכו"ם. ודאי צדק כתר"ה שאין לעשות כן והאמת שלא ראיתי ולא שמעתי שת"ח ואנשי מעשה יעשו זה. אבל לענין דינא יש לדון בזה ונוטה יותר שאין בזה איסור.

Never had such a practice in the past but that doesn’t make it Assur – just different. Maybe it encourages people today to be minachem Avel? (Certainly do not need to send it back)

Rav Willig --- But it was never Assur AFTER Shiva. EVERYONE allows after shiva.

1. **In the tradition of 2 Jews and 437 views, last week another great Jewish controversy began over Whats APP. It involved the kosher status of Grey goose vodka. Word spread quickly that the vodka was not kosher, major kashrus organizations rushed to conclusions, major retailers removed the product from their shelves and Shuls world-wide forbade it (and in a place like crown heights, this was incredibly impactful). Soon after, a retraction to the whole story was printed and things somewhat calmed down though there still seems to be some cryptic commentary coming from Rabbis. Can you tell me what is/was going on? Maybe over a shot of “Grey goose”?**

When we deal with issues in Halacha – especially food halacha, it is important to know what the issues are with them. When we deal with wines, there are some key terms we need to know:

**Yayin nesech** (lit., “poured wine”) refers to wine which was poured in the service of idolatry. The Torah prohibits drinking or deriving any benefit (isur hana’ah) from such wine (Avoda Zara 29b).

**Stam yainum** refers to wine which ***might have*** been poured for an idolatrous service, but we did not see it happen. In the days of the Mishnah, there was a pagan ritual to pour off some wine from every bottle in honor of an idol. Because of the uncertainty, the rabbis decreed that wine that was produced by a nachri, or even kosher wine which was left unattended with a nachri, is forbidden for drinking and benefit because it may have been poured for idolatry. After the rabbinic decree was enacted we treat stam yainum as if we saw it being poured (Tur Y.D. 123).

Even if the nachri who touched the wine was a monotheist, and he would therefore certainly not serve an idol, the rabbis still forbade the wine, for another reason—because sharing wine can lead to intermarriage. However, in this case, it is only forbidden to drink the wine, but one may benefit from this wine in other ways (e.g., it may be bought and sold). (See Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 123:26 and Shach 123:51.)

Once it is cooked (mevushal), kosher wine does not become forbidden even if touched by a nachri (Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 123:3). This is because Chazal saw the process of cooking the wine as permanently altering its status and making it unable to be brought for Avoda Zara purposes. The same logic does not apply to other processes like denaturing the alcohol – so much so that the OU noted:

Denaturing alcohol does not change its forbidden status with respect to deriving benefit. Even if wine was burned and reduced to ashes, those ashes would continue to be assur bihan’ah (see Shach YD 123:26). Similarly, Rav Ovadia Yosef zt”l writes in Yabia Omer (YD 7:11) that chemically changing non-kosher wine into a completely different substance, would not alter its status, and it would still be forbidden to benefit from it. However, if wine alcohol was mixed with other ingredients in a ratio of less than one to sixty, bitul bishishim (nullification in sixty parts) would apply. One may drink the mixture and derive benefit as well.

Therefore, we are forbidden not only from actual wine because of Stam Yeinam but also not to consume grape juices, concentrates etc. produced without proper assurances that these items were only handled by Jews.

This is a BIG HUGE issue today with a popular drink called Starbucks refreshers (evolutions, refresher and discoveries) . The Refreshers have, at their base, Ice, Kiwi Starfruit Refresher Base [Water, Sugar, White Grape Juice Concentrate, Natural Flavors, Citric Acid, Natural Green Coffee Flavor, Fruit Juice For Color (Watermelon And Juito Fruit), Rebaudiside A, Turmeric For Color], Freeze Dried Kiwi.

Ice, Strawberry Acai Base [Water, Sugar, White Grape Juice Concentrate, Citric Acid, Natural Flavors, Natural Green Coffee Flavor, Fruit And Vegetable Juice, Rebaudioside A], Lemonade [Water, Lemon Juice, Sugar, Lemon Oil], Freeze Dried Strawberries.

--- creating a problem. This is distinct from the ones sold in cans with the OU whose base does not have the grape concentrate.

A similar issue comes up often in flavored alcohols, evne those that are not wine based. (Wine based ones MUST have a Hechsher – and this is without getting into the whole “Sherry cask” thing). It is not uncommon to have actual wine or grape concentrate in the flavoring of even grain based alcohol and therefore the alcohol would indeed be unkosher.

An additional comment – it is incumbent upon the consumer to know the issues if s/he is paskening the Shailos. Here, the issues are not so murky. They just involve critical research and it is up to the Kashrus organization and its standards to reflect its opinion on the acceptability of the item.

This brought us back to the Grey Goose controversey of 2021:

The CRC of Chicago maintains one of the most extensive lists of Kosher alcohol in the world today. Their policy is that unless the item is verified as Kosher, they do not say it meets their standards. It has come to our attention that a popular vodka, produced in France, was considered acceptable in kosher homes even without a hechsher. The cRc has always advised that vodka produced in France, Ireland, and New Zealand requires special attention out of concern that it may be produced from wine or dairy alcohol. In fact, there have been persistent rumors that this vodka from France contains alcohol produced from wine. As we know, wine products require special hashgacha to avoid the concern of stam yeinam – wine produced by non-observant Jews. As stated, we believe that unless a particular product meets generally accepted guidelines for kosher liquor, the assumption is that the product is not kosher until verified otherwise.

Because of the above, we never officially published that it was not recommended nor did we say it was recommended. We simply left it off our kosher liquor list because vodka from France needs to be verified as kosher.

Thus, when Whatsapp-ed by a person as to the status of Grey goose unflavored, the person was told that the CRC does not recommend it (correctly as per their policy) but this was misinterpreted and reposted by others outside the cRc (without contacting them first) to state that they have firsthand knowledge that there is wine in the product. This is untrue. Our position was based on the stated concern.

After extensive research, we have now discovered that there is a special run produced under hashgacha specifically for the Israeli market (with kashering the lines to avoid any contact with equipment used for non-kosher products) and the cRC has verified that the source for the standard alcohol for this company is solely grain based.

However, this same company does produce a non-kosher version of vodka which contains grape based alcohol, but the standard unflavored version is solely grain based. Therefore, as long the company continues to maintain special kosher runs, the above information is considered accurate.

We once again maintain that it is best to consume these products with a proper hechsher.