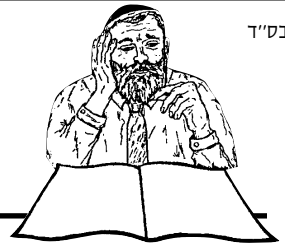


THE Daf HaKASHRUS



A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE  RABBINIC FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

CONSUMERS' FAQS ON KOSHER FISH PART II

RABBI CHAIM GOLDBERG
Rabbinic Coordinator - Fish Industry

Q: Can I bring my own knife to a non-certified fish store and have the workers prepare the fish for me?

A: Yes, but there are several issues to be aware of when doing this:

1. You must bring a kosher cutting board as well, or have the store cover their cutting board, so that the fat of non-kosher fish on the board will not touch your fish. Make certain, as well, that the person cutting the fish washes their hands or changes their gloves before handling your kosher fish.¹
2. Be **very familiar** with the fish that you are buying, or check its kosher status personally before its skin is removed (see last month's issue of *The Daf* for how and why). **One cannot use a kosher fish list to select a fish** (as explained there).
3. Be sure the employee who is working with your order does not mix non-kosher pieces of fish (or pieces that were not properly supervised) into your order.
4. One must be certain that the worker only uses the knife and board that you brought with you. This is particularly true when you do not bring a high-quality filleting knife, because it will be to the worker's benefit to use the store's knife, as the wrong knife is hard to work with. You cannot rely on a store that claims to have separate knives for kosher customers, unless the store has reliable kosher supervision.
5. Try to shop during hours that the store is less busy. Fish sellers will be more cooperative with the necessary requirements for a kosher order, as described above, if there are fewer customers waiting and the store is not being rushed to fill orders.

Q: What makes fish roe (eggs) kosher or non-kosher?

A: The eggs of fish have the same kosher status as the fish they come from, as do most foods that originate from a living creature.² If a fish is kosher, the eggs found inside of it are kosher. Non-kosher fish, such as sturgeon, have non-kosher roe. Once roe is removed from a kosher fish (much like the flesh of the fish itself, after the skin is removed) it requires kosher supervision. Thus, even roe from a kosher fish could not be regarded as kosher unless it was under Rabbinical supervision from the moment of its extraction. The exception to this rule is red roe (i.e. from salmon or trout), which the *Beis Yosef*'s rules can be accepted as kosher without supervision (when processed in "dedicated" equipment and no ingredient other than salt is used.) The basis given for this leniency is that the *Beis Yosef* asserts that no non-kosher fish has red roe that remains red after salting. Though some have questioned the basis of this assertion,⁴ the Orthodox Union accepts the *Beis Yosef*'s ruling.

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FROM THE HEART

In memory of the passing of Rabbi Aharon Steinberg Z'l

BY RABBI YITZCHOK GALLOR
RFR-WA



What can I write? Whatever I say, it's not enough! There are so many words in my head - so many feelings in my heart - that they don't stay long enough for me to write them down. When I do write something, it is so deficient that I discount it and start again. The truth is that a large book could be written about a giant *neshama* called 'Aharon Steinberg'. His past, present and future dreams were no secret. He gave up his fame and fortune, and made a pact with *Hashem* which nobody nor anything could break.

Reb Aharon founded the procedures of the OU Concord grape juice production, the largest such production in the world and ran it for at least ten years. He treated everybody as a part of his team. At the grape harvest he would fund food for his crew of eight *mashgichim* from his own pocket for the two months of the harvest. He told the *mashgichim* that the food was included, free of charge. He treated, and was treated with respect and fondness wherever he went. He touched everyone's heart. The companies that he worked with even invited him to business meetings, so that they could have his input.

Whether speaking to a CEO, students at a local public high school, or promoting his slogan for **K-O-S-H-E-R = Keep Our Souls Healthy Eat Right**, everyone remembers Rabbi Steinberg.

When I was at his home eight months after he had left the OU, and having been bed ridden for the past two months, a fax came in from his previous company in China, asking Reb Aharon for his help. He told me to make sure that I took care of the company.

Reb Aharon was on a mission from *Hashem* and for *Hashem*. He used all of his genius, perseverance, and charisma to accomplish it, and indeed he succeeded.

PLEASE NOTE: NEW DATE

If you are a Congregational Rabbi, Semicha student, Chaver Hakollel or member of a Vaad HaKashruth, reserve the week of Monday, August 2 to Friday, August 6 for

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For more information call Rabbi Yosef Grossman at 212-613-8212 or email Grossman@ou.org

FISH

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Q: Is it true that Blue Marlin is kosher?

A: Yes! Before the World Series Champions from Florida won the 2003 Major League Baseball Title, their mascot (whose Latin name is *Makaira mazara*) was approved for consumption⁵ in kosher kitchens. Despite resembling the non-kosher swordfish, (see below) Blue Marlin has the single requirement of a kosher fish; it has *kaskeses*.

Q: Besides shellfish, which are some common non-kosher fish to be aware of?

A: **Catfish** - (family *Ictaluridae*) lack scales entirely.⁶ Interesting for the kosher consumer to note, non-kosher catfish is reported to have a similar taste to the increasingly popular (and kosher variety of) tilapia.⁷ Catfish and tilapia fillets look almost identical, though catfish is notably cheaper. It is quite possible that an unscrupulous fish retailer might switch the two.

Basa or Tra (also called "China sole") - (family *Pangasiidae*) are currently the subject of both nomenclature debates and antidumping litigation. Vietnamese importers were marketing them as catfish, to which they are nearly identical. Whether they are in fact catfish or not, they are not kosher.⁸

Sturgeon (family *Acipenseriformes*) as described earlier, its ganoid scales⁹ are not easily detached from its body, and thus are not "*kaskeses*". A discussion about the kosher status of this fish can be found in a series of responsa from the *Nodah B'yehudah*¹⁰ where he seems to permit an Astoriyan, which bears close resemblance (in its characteristics) to a sturgeon. The *Pischei Teshuva*¹¹ and other later authorities take issue with the *Nodah B'yehudah* (who appears to be the single authority permitting this fish). The Orthodox Union regards sturgeon as non-kosher.

Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) does not seem to have scales when one looks at a sample. Some say that it has scales that are embedded to such an extent that it is impossible to remove them without making a hole. Others say that it has kosher scales on parts of its body which fall off during its development. Still others claim that it may have some kosher scales even at the time of harvest. The Orthodox Union traditionally treats swordfish as non-kosher.¹²

Though your mother was right, and you should not judge a **book** by its cover, you should most certainly judge a **kosher fish** by its cover... its scales and identifying skin!

¹ If the flesh of kosher fish touches non-kosher fish oil, one cannot merely rinse the fish but rather must scrub it vigorously (referred to in *halacha* as *shif-shuf gadol*) or scrape the point of contact with a knife or stiff-bristled brush (referred to in *halacha* as *graida*).

² *Yoreh Deah* 81:1.

³ Cited in *Shach* 83:27.

⁴ See *Aruch HaShulchan* #50 and *Pri Chadash* #26.

⁵ Rabbi Y. Ephrati wrote this Psak in the name of Rabbi Y. Elyashiv in a *Teshuva* dated the 11th of Elul, 5763

⁶ Peterson's Field Guides *Freshwater Fishes*, 1991, Drs. Lawrence Paige and Brooks Burr.

⁷ *Seafood Business Magazine*, August 2003 issue.

⁸ For more on Basa and Tra see www.seafoodbusiness.com/buyguide/issue_basa.htm.

⁹ More precisely "scutes", which are technically defined as

"enlarged scales often containing one or more bony projections". See Peterson's Field Guides *Freshwater Fishes*, 1991, Drs. Lawrence Paige and Brooks Burr.

¹⁰ *Sh'ailos and Teshuvos Nodah B'yehudah, Yoreh Deah Tinyana* 28-30.

¹¹ *Yoreh Deah* 83:1. See also *Sh'ailos and Teshuvos Tzitz Eliezer* 9:40 and 11:54 where he says explicitly that we cannot permit Sturgeon for several reasons.

¹² See *Sh'ailos and Teshuvos Tzitz Eliezer* 9:40 who discusses a statement made by the *Knesses HaGedolah* about "*cherev hadag*" and explains why we cannot use the statement to permit swordfish.

MAZAL TOV TO ...

our devoted RFR in Brooklyn, NY **RABBI GERSHON TEPPER AND HIS WIFE** on the engagement of their son Azriel to Estie Meyers from Wickliffe, OH.

our dedicated Rabbinic Coordinator **RABBI LEONARD STEINBERG AND HIS WIFE** on the birth and Bris of their son, Yosef.

the Editor of *The Daf HaKashrus*, **RABBI YOSEF GROSSMAN AND HIS WIFE** on the engagement of their son Raphael to Dini Reich from Toronto, Canada.

KASHRUTH alert!

CALAVO HOMESTYLE, MILD & FIESTA GUACAMOLE produced by Calavo Growers, Santa Ana, CA had had changes in the production facility, and the products currently being sold mistakenly bear an unauthorized © symbol and are not certified as Kosher by the Orthodox Union. Corrective action is being taken.

CEPRIO ITALIAN HOME STYLE GIARDINIERA produced by ViaRoma Foods, Inc., Wheeling, IL bears an unauthorized ©P symbol and is not certified as Kosher by the Orthodox Union. Consumers spotting this product are requested to contact the Orthodox Union at 212-613-8169 or email howardk@ou.org.

CASTELLO PONTE TUNA FISH in vegetable oil (Spanish label) produced by Songkia Canning, Thailand and distributed in South America, mistakenly bears an ©P symbol.

IMPERIAL & TOPAZ WAFER ROLLS in a can - product of Greece distributed by Rokeach Food Dist., Newark, NJ bears a label stating kosher pareve-special production. The products may contain traces of dairy. Consumers should return the product to the store of purchase for a refund. The product is being recalled.

Healthy Choice, Los Angeles, CA is distributing assorted flavors and sizes of **ISLAND BLENDS JUICES** bearing an unauthorized © symbol. Consumers spotting any products of Island Blends that bear an © symbol are requested to call 212-613-8148 or email loewia@ou.org.

CONDOLENCES TO...

our devoted RFR **RABBI MOSHE TURNER** of Monsey, NY on the recent loss of his mother Mrs. Chana Chaya Turner A'H of Monsey/Yerushalayim.

♦ המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים ♦