

THE *Daf HaKASHRUS*



A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE OU RABBINIC FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

HARRY H. BEREN ASK OU TRAINING SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT



Participants in the three-week ASK OU Internship Program pose in front of the Hampton Inn in Hanover, PA where they stayed overnight during their two-day tour of OU facilities in PA. They visited Empire Poultry, Hanover Foods and Pos'tiv Produce.

DAF NOTES

For the first time, the recently concluded Harry H. Beren ASK OU Internship Program had an educator in its midst. Dr. Neal received a Masters degree from University of LaVerne in school administration and a PhD in education from Common Wealth University. For over 35 years, Dr. Neal has taught preschool through college in a variety of subjects including math, science, reading, writing, mechanical drawing, and performing arts. He has presented on the district, county, state, and national levels in the areas of math and science. The following is Dr. Neal's review and critique of the ASK OU program. The editor of The Daf HaKashrus personally thanks Dr. Neal for his kind words.

ASK OU FROM AN EDUCATOR'S PERSPECTIVE

DR. DOV YITZCHOK NEAL

Portland, OR

I JUST COMPLETED a very unique experience with the ASK OU 10 program in New York City. As a professional educator for over 35 years, I would like to take the opportunity to review and critique the ASK OU program from an educator's point of view. The definition of pedagogy is the art or science of teaching; education; instructional methods (Dictionary.com). The pedagogical approach used by the OU and Rabbi Grossman in particular meets this definition to the last letter.

The seminars took in all the modalities of education: auditory, visual, kinesthetic (moving around) and thematic approaches. An entire day was spent on Kashering everything from kitchens to factories. One day we do fish, one day we do meat. Educationally, the program follows the criteria of reaching out to every technique of learning.



IT'S A LONG WAY TO STUDY KASHRUT

*ASK OU 10 Seminars on Kosher Law and Practice
Draw Participants from Near and Far*

STEPHEN STEINER

OU Public Relations

WHERE would you go if you wanted to learn the fine art of kashrut from experts, combining studies of the laws of kosher with the hands-on experiences that only those experts can provide? For dozens of rabbis and advanced rabbinical students this summer, the answer was the Orthodox Union.

When OU Kosher presented its Harry H. Beren ASK OU 10 program at its headquarters in New York, participants came not only from the local area, including most prominently Brooklyn and Monsey in New York and Lakewood in New Jersey, major centers of Torah study, but they came from further away as well – from Montreal in Canada and Watertown in the far reaches of upstate New York; from Baltimore and Cleveland; from Cherry Hill, NJ and Norwalk, CT; but also from communities not exactly in the New York metropolitan area – from Savannah, Georgia; Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; Portland, Oregon; and Rouen, France -- the same Rouen where six centuries ago Joan of Arc was burned at the stake. Immediately following the program, one of its graduates was scheduled to leave for his new rabbinical assignment: Sydney, Australia.

Rabbi Yerucham Schochet from Savannah; Rabbi David Laufer

The three week ASK OU internship program is a very unique program covering all areas of today's working kashrus. During the three weeks of this intensive program, we covered the following areas of kashrus via classroom format, hands-on approach, and "field trips" around the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The areas of study included: The Art of Excellent Hashgocho, Current Dairy Issues, Akum, Fowl, Beef, Food Service, Fish, Vegetables, Chemicals and Ingredients, Contractual Issues in Hashgocha, and much more. Field trips consisted of a visit to Allentown and the Pos'tiv Produce facility where we received more education on bugs than imaginable; a slaughter-house trip to Empire Kosher with detailed discussion and demonstration; and various industrial factories, restaurants, and hotels. The mashgichim explained their jobs with hands on examples including detailed stories covering all areas of kashrus. The OU leadership spoke to us regarding their particular areas of expertise. Their teaching methods encouraged questions in a warm and welcoming atmosphere and gave us more information than four legal pads held. It was an amazing three weeks.

Looking at this program from an educator perspective, I would like to offer the following observations: First and foremost, for any educator here is a question, "Who are the most difficult students that a teacher can teach?" Answer, for those of you that hit this right on the head is, of course, teachers. Now taking this same question to a new level, the OU had the merit of teaching almost 30 rabbis over these last three weeks in this internship program. Imagine teaching some 30 rabbis who know Yoreh Deah and Basar B'Cholov in depth. The chief orchestrator of this miracle was Rabbi Yosef Grossman, Director of Kosher Education at the OU. Rabbi Grossman not only planned these three weeks but he also made sure the schedule was kept to the minute. Many a class did we see Rabbi Grossman walk into the room while the presenter was finishing up a passionate description of a solution to a worst case scenario in kashrus and our very own Rabbi Grossman entered the room, expertly thanking the presenter for his

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from Edmonton; Rabbi Dr. Dov Yitzchak Neal from Portland; Rabbi Chalom (pronounced Shalom) Levy from France; and Rabbi Avraham Colman of Lakewood, soon to be from Sydney, were among the 64 registrants in the courses.

The purpose of ASK OU 10, like its nine predecessors, was to educate the new generation of kashrut professionals or to provide background for those who will not practice kashrut certification full time, but who will benefit in their daily work from advanced kosher education. As in past years, many of the graduates of the program – which is offered in alternate summers -- are expected to work for large kosher certification agencies or for their local Va'ad HaKashrut. Including the current class, ASK OU has produced more than 650 graduates from all over the globe, many of whom have gone on to take important positions in the kosher world.

ASK OU 10 is made up of three-week and one-week sessions. The three-week group consisted of semicha or members of a kollel for post-rabbinic education. The one-weekers included congregational rabbis, semicha students, kollel members, or members of a local va'ad.

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Funding for ASK OU 10 comes from the

Harry H. Beren Foundation of Lakewood, NJ. The Beren Foundation provides financial support to a wide variety of OU kashrut education programs for all levels of knowledge and ages.

“It has been our great pleasure and privilege to once again service young men from around the globe who have turned to the Orthodox Union and its experts for guidance in the intricacies of practical kashrut procedures,” declared Rabbi Yosef Grossman, OU Senior Educational Rabbinic Coordinator, who organized the program, “The high standards of kosher protocol they have observed will do much to strengthen kashrut worldwide.”

WORTH THE TIME AND EXPENSE

Each of the long-distance students agreed that it was worth the time and expense to come all the way to New York to sit at the feet of OU Kosher’s staff experts and guest lecturers. These experts included Rabbi Menachem Genack, Chief Executive Officer of OU Kosher; Rabbi Hershel Schachter, Rosh Yeshiva at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University, and one of two OU Kosher poseks – halachic decisors; as well as a long list of OU Kosher rabbinic coordinators and rabbinic field representatives, who taught their specialties to often enthralled audiences. Outside experts such as a skilled butcher demonstrated their wares; field trips to OU certified restaurants, banquet facilities and plants allowed the students to see how kosher laws are put to practical use in the field.

Rabbi Schochet from Savannah speaks with a southern accent – southern Africa that is. He is a native of Johannesburg, who has studied and worked in Baltimore; Des Moines, Iowa; Eugene, Oregon; and New Haven, Connecticut. He does kashrut work and is a member of the local kollel in Savannah.

“I came because I’m working in kashrut, to increase my knowledge, to go behind the scenes at the OU to understand the practical aspects of kashrut and to be more effective when I go back to Savannah,” Rabbi Schochet explained.

Rabbi Laufer has done kashrut work in both Jerusalem and Edmonton, where he has lived for four years and is director of the local kollel. “People, both religious and non-religious, are constantly asking me kashrut questions, so the OU is the best place to be connected to, with the resources and the information it provides,” he explained. “You see things live that you

learned in yeshiva,” he said. “That’s what the program is all about.”

Rabbi Dr. Neal moved recently to Portland from Bakersfield, California, where he taught for years on levels from pre-school through college. He also did kashrut work in Bakersfield and Los Angeles, helping people make their kitchens kosher. “Between a couple of pots of boiling water and my blowtorch I fixed them up,” he said. Now, in Oregon, he intends to be involved in kiruv work while doing industrial kashrut in factories.

As an expert in education, Dr. Neal sees ASK OU 10 as a giant exercise in show and tell. “Educationally, it is a program that takes in all the modalities of education: auditory, visual, kinesthetic (moving around) and thematic approaches,” he explained. “Yesterday was an entire day based on kashering everything from kitchens to factories. One day we do fish, one day we do meat. From an educator’s point of view, the program follows the criteria of reaching out to every technique of learning.”

Rabbi Levy, from France, was a mashgiach in Manchester, England as well as in Rouen and elsewhere in France and wants to establish a Va’ad HaKashrut in Rouen. He came to New York “to have a wide overview of many kashrut issues that I learned in Yoreh Deah, and to bring this wide expansion of knowledge home with me.”

Rabbi Colman, a native of Toronto, is a student at Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, the famed yeshiva where OU Kosher has presented well-attended kashrut seminars in its outreach program, also sponsored by the Harry H. Beren Foundation. “We all appre-

ciate the OU giving us this opportunity to see the workings of this large, international organization,” he said.

The entire class was fascinated by the demonstration of nikkur – removing the veins from meat, as required by Jewish law. After an introductory explanation by Rav Aharon Teitelbaum, the Nirbater Rav, the group saw

ASK OU HAS PRODUCED MORE THAN 650 GRADUATES

a dazzling display of skill by master butcher Reb Yaakov Jakobowits of Alle Processing in Maspeth, Queens, NY, wielding a knife in a huge slab of meat. “It’s the first time I saw nikkur and it was fascinating and educational,” exclaimed Rabbi Colman, the soon-to-be-resident of Australia. Agreed Savannah’s Rabbi Schochet, “Clearly there is expertise in this area, knowing exactly where to cut. It is always wonderful to see experts at work.”

Before leaving for home, these young men agreed that the makeup of the group, spanning the spectrum of Orthodoxy from centrist to Hassidic, was an asset to the program and that there was a bonding between the different wings of Torah Judaism. The dedication of both the teachers and the students made an impression as well. “The bug checkers were very, very intense. These men are passionate at what they do,” said Rabbi Dr. Neal of Portland. Noted the OU’s Rabbi Grossman, “With their attention and with their enthusiasm, the participants made it clear that whether they came from neighboring Brooklyn or from across the ocean, they were there to learn and to improve their skills.”

HOURS of classes and days spent on field trips made a major impact on the participants in ASK OU 10, whether they were in the three-week or one-week session. “Over the last few weeks I have seen a lot of what the OU does and how it functions, and have been left awed by the knowledge, professionalism and meticulousness which seem to accompany every facet of its operations,” declared Rabbi Ari Feldstein of Queens, NY in a report he submitted titled, “A Wowed Outsider’s View.”

His opinion was seconded by Rabbi Jake Czuper, also of Queens. “Over the past three weeks, my internship at the Orthodox Union has allowed me to concretely experience the Shulchan Aruch, and I am truly grateful to the OU for aiding me in my quest to really understand the halacha on the most practical level.”

“It was an impressive gathering of bright minds, presenters and participants,” said Rabbi Label Lam of Spring Valley, NY. “I loved the three weeks,” said one anonymous participant. “Amazing,” enthused Rabbi Avshalom Gotlib of Lakewood, NJ. “It was informative, educational, empowering, enjoyable, well-run and organized. Shall I continue?”

Three weeks were not enough for Brooklyn’s Rabbi Ephraim Turner. “The hardest thing for me about this program is that it has come to an end,” he said.

It will be back at OU Kosher in two years to educate another group of stellar young men in the modern practical applications of the ancient laws of kashrut.

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hour long lecture and introducing the next presenter with a biographical sketch that one would see at a Kollel Dinner introduction of a keynote speaker. Rabbi Grossman not only reminded the next presenter of his 55 minutes of lecture followed by five minutes of Q & A, but this uncompromising 60 minutes of lecture with Q & A kept the program on track and moving for the full three weeks without stagnation.

As an educator, we always have those students in class that are memorable in their questions, passion, and statements but also have the potential of taking the class off track to say the least. Rabbi Grossman not only met those students' needs but turned potentially difficult students into subheadings of upcoming learning sessions and tied all needs together in a wonderfully humorous and positive manner.

Through all the potentially stressful times or when circumstances changed at a moment's notice, I observed a completely seamless

transition from one topic to the next. Hearing Rabbi Grossman say "Rabbosai" quickly and completely turned our attention back to the topic of discussion. Imagine the many uses of this word and under an expert teacher/administrator it was used to move between 30 and 70 plus Torah scholars through three weeks and instilled a passion for the present and future world of Kashrus.

On field trips, Rabbi Grossman brought his secret weapon that was used whether the group needed it or not. The ever present bull-horn with a month supply of batteries was used at all stops and all situations. I also had the unique opportunity to "ride into the city" with Rabbi Grossman. On many occasions our discussions centered around teaching, the daf hayomi, family and Portland.

Yeshar Koach to the OU and the Gedolim. Thank you to Rabbi Yosef Grossman who made a three week program not only enjoyable and informational, but instilled a passion for Kashrus. The OU is truly the backbone in the world of Kashrus. ■

HARRY H. BEREN



ASK OU TRAINING

A Pictorial Essay



Seminar participants: (L-R) Rabbis Laufer (Edmonton), Schochet (Savannah), Levy (France), Colman (Lakewood / Sydney)



Partial view of ASK OU participants surround (L-R) Rabbi Schreiber, Rabbi Grossman, Rabbi Elefant, Rabbi Burg, Rabbi Genack



(L-R) Dr. Dov Neal (Portland, OR), Rabbi Yosef Grossman, Rabbi David Laufer (Edmonton, CA)



Rav Herschel Schachter delivers shiur on Hilchos Kashrus.



Rabbi Elefant discusses OU meat policies.

ASK OU TRAINING

A Pictorial Essay



Mr. Philip Herzog at Royal Wine (Kedem) in Marlboro, NY passionately discussing his favorite subject - Kosher wine production.



Dressed for an inspection



Discussing rail deliveries at Hanover Foods



With real mesiras nefesh Rabbi Richard Levine discusses Hanover Foods



Rabbi Feit from Empire Poultry discusses Hilchos Shechitah



Using the bull horn to make a point during plant tour



The Hanover, PA Hampton Inn ASK OU Bais Hamedrash

ASK OU TRAINING

A Pictorial Essay



Preparing cabbage for removal of insects at Pos'tiv Produce in Allentown, PA



The Nirbater Rav (R) demonstrates a punctured "reah"



Reb Yaakov Jakubowitz removes a forbidden vein in the Nikkur process... in front of fascinated ASK OU participants



(L-R) Rabbi Yoel Schonfeld and Rabbi Dovid Jenkins discuss in-town and out-of-town Vaadei Hakashrus



Rabbi Moshe Perlmutter demonstrates kashering by video and answers questions by Skype from Vail, Colorado



Rabbi Moshe Yosef Blumenberg delivers shiur on anisakis in fish