

The Seforim That Will Enhance Your Semicha Studies

BY SHMUEL SUPER

In this article, we will survey a number of *seforim* on the halachos from *Yoreh Deah* that are studied for *semichah*. We will begin with aids to the study of the Shulchan Aruch and its *nosei keilim*, and then examine some practical halachah *seforim* that focus on the contemporary application of these halachos in the modern kitchen.



Shulchan Aruch Hamevu'ar – Basar Bechalav Oz Vehadar, 5771

The Oz Vehadar *Shulchan Aruch Hamevu'ar* on Hilchos Basar Bechalav is comprised of five sections. As an introduction to the topic, the *sefer* begins with encyclopedia-style brief summaries of key concepts in Hilchos Basar Bechalav and Taaruvos, such as חתיכה ביטול, ג'ט בר נ"ט and נעשית גבילה.

The summaries provide a basic definition of the concept, trace it through the sources in the Gemara, explain the *deoraysa* and *derabanan* levels when applicable, and provide basic details regarding how the concept is applied. These summaries are excellent to read as an introduction before beginning to learn the halachos, and to consult when the concept arises in the course of study.

The second section of this *sefer* is an elucidated Shulchan Aruch, following the same general format as the popular Mesivta Gemaras.

The right hand page presents a traditional *tzuras hadaf* style format of the text of the Shulchan Aruch, surrounded by the Shach and Taz, and the *Biur Hagra*, *Chidushei R. Akivah Eiger*, *Be'er Heitev*, and *Pischei Teshuvah* beneath.

The facing page on the left contains an elucidation of the text of the Shulchan Aruch. Every *siman* begins with an introduction surveying the content of the *siman* and providing background information for the key concepts it discusses. This is a very helpful

feature, but the introductions are somewhat lengthy, and sometimes include *chakiros* that aren't necessary as an introduction.

Each *se'if* is given a header describing its contents and the more complex *se'ifim* have their own introduction providing background about the various opinions in the *rishonim*, clarifying concepts that will be introduced, and summarizing the *se'if*. This is followed by the text of the *se'if* with an interpolated explanation of the *mechaber* and the Rema, copiously footnoted with sources and additional comments.

These very helpful introductions could have perhaps been improved if the summary parts had been separated from the introduction and instead placed at the end of the *se'if* as a *chazarah* aid.

The third section of this volume is the explanations of the Shach and Taz. This section includes the original text of every *se'if katan*, alongside a *biur* that is essentially a rewording of the content of the *se'if katan*—including all of the *shakla vetarya*—in a simpler style that is easier for non-experienced students to follow. The footnotes summarize the *chidushei dinim* of the *se'if katan* and cite the opinions of the later *achronim* on the matter, including the key pieces from *Peri Megadim*.

The fourth section is titled תוספות ההלכה ואוצר השו"ת, and it contains a lengthy and detailed analysis of practical halachic questions, arranged in the order of the *simanim* of the Shulchan Aruch. These pieces trace the halachah from the original sources down to its contemporary application in *sifrei shu"t*.

The fifth and final section, תמצית הסיימנים, presents brief *se'if-by-se'if* summaries of the key points from each of the previous three sections. This is a very useful aid for *chazarah*.

A LOOK Inside the BOOK

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Shulchan Aruch Hamevu'ar is an excellent volume that all *semichah* students will benefit from greatly, even if they don't need every one of the many elements and lengthy explanations this *sefer* contains.



Shaarei Yoreh Deah – Melichah, Basar Bechalav, and Taaruvos Rabbi Eliezer Brod, 5762–5781

Rabbi Eliezer Brod's recently published *Shaarei Yoreh Deah* on Hilchos Taaruvos (5781) joins the previous volumes on Hilchos Basar Bechalav (5762) and Hilchos Melichah (5769), thus completing a set covering the three sections of Yoreh Deah studied for *semichah*.

Shaarei Yoreh Deah reproduces the original text of the Shulchan Aruch at the top of the page. Beneath this appears Nesiv Hashach and Nesiv Hataz, which contain brief summaries of the Shach and Taz.

Finally, at the bottom of the page there are footnotes titled Harchev Davar which expand the discussion beyond the words of the Shulchan Aruch and its basic *nosei keilim*. This section quotes additional



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details regarding the halachos from other *poskim*, provides further explanation of the difficult pieces in the Shach and Taz, and also indicates what the practical halachah is in cases of *machlokes* between the aforementioned authorities.

An additional important feature of the Harchev Davar is the citation of the opinions of the Alter Rebbe and Tzemach Tzedek. We do not possess the parts of the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch on these halachos, but there are related discussions of many of these *sugyos* in other places in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, such as Hilchos Pesach. The Tzemach Tzedek also gives some rulings regarding these halachos in various places.

Due to this information being scattered across various *seforim*, insufficient attention was paid to it in the past. *Piskei Admur Hazaken Behilchos Isur Veheter*, published by Kehos (5756) collected all of the relevant material from the *seforim* of the Alter Rebbe and Tzemach Tzedek, and *Shaarei Yoreh Deah* incorporates this information in the Harchev Davar. The volume on Melichah also includes rulings from the *She'eiris Yehudah*, by the Alter Rebbe's brother, Harav Yehudah Leib of Yanovitch.

Harchev Davar also addresses some practical questions, quoting from contemporary *poskim*, but far from enough to teach the student how to apply these halachos in a modern kitchen.

The volume on Hilchos Basar Bechalav also contained some lengthier excursions at the end of the volume under the title *Iyun Davar*, but in the other volumes such information was incorporated into the Harchev Davar as well.

The author of these *seforim*, Rabbi Eliezer Brod, has many years of experience in teaching bochorim for *semichah* in Yeshivas Ohr Simchah in Kfar Chabad. This experience shows in the *seforim*, which are clear and concise, providing the information necessary for a basic grasp on the halachos.

Pesakim Uteshuvos – Yoreh Deah 87-122

Rabbi Aharon Aryeh Katz,
5781

The new *Pesakim Uteshuvos* on Yoreh Deah 87-122, by Rabbi Aharon Aryeh Katz, follows the format of the acclaimed *Piskei Teshuvos* on Orach Chayim, which was written by Rabbi Katz's father-in-law, Rabbi **Simchah**

Rabinowitz. A previous volume in this series published in 5777 covered simanim 240-266 of Yoreh Deah, and a revised edition of this volume is forthcoming.

The new volume covers the halachos of Basar Bechalav and Taaruvos; the rules of *sfek sfeika* (double doubt) and its application in *paskening* halachah; *maachalei akum*; and *tevilah* and *hagalas keilim*.

This *sefer* helps address an unfortunate problem with the way Yoreh Deah is often learned. There is a wide chasm between the reality of kitchens in the time of the Shulchan Aruch and *nosei keilim* and our own modern reality. It is therefore possible for a *bochur* to learn all of the halachos thoroughly, pass the tests, and receive *semichah*, and yet still be almost clueless when confronted with a practical question in the kitchen.

Pesakim Uteshuvos bridges this gap between the classic halachic sources and the contemporary kitchen. Following the order of the Shulchan Aruch, *Pesakim Uteshuvos* addresses the related practical halachic questions, with an emphasis on the modern questions that result from technological development. Every *se'if* starts with the relevant piece from Shulchan Aruch, and goes through the opinions of later *poskim*, up to the contemporary authorities who apply the halachos to our modern reality.

For example, *Pesakim Uteshuvos* addresses the contemporary questions of cooking meat and dairy together in ovens with broil setting, toaster ovens, pyrolytic self-cleaning ovens, double ovens with separate compartments, and microwaves. Practical instructions are also given for *kashering* modern ovens and microwaves (92:23-26). Practical questions such as what to do if a hot *fleishig* lid was placed on a *milchig* counter are also addressed (93:7).

This volume contains a detailed index, and also a new feature—biographical information for *seforim* quoted to help the reader assess their place in the halachic process. There is a list of Hebrew terms in the back of the book with English translations, but these are mainly for foods and ingredients, omitting many important technical terms. For example, the oven setting known in modern Hebrew as גריל is called “broil” in English, and תנור פירוליטי means a pyrolytic self-cleaning oven. Translations of these technical terms are missing, and this will challenge the non-Israeli reader at times.

Pesakim Uteshuvos is an ideal companion volume to be studied alongside the *simanim* in the Shulchan Aruch. As mentioned above, the *Shulchan Aruch Hamevu'ar* also contains a section dedicated to practical questions, but *Pesakim Uteshuvos* is more concise and comprehensive.

Beyond its value for those learning for *semichah*, *Pesakim Uteshuvos* is an important *sefer* for every Jewish home with a kitchen. While the author makes clear that such works of *likutim* shouldn't be relied upon without looking up the sources and consulting a Rov when necessary, many simple questions that arise can be resolved by looking up the topic in this *sefer*, and for more complex matters one will learn how to pose the question to a Rov.

Hilchos Basar Bechalav Rabbi Ze'ev Hofstadter, 5780

Hilchos Basar Bechalav is another practical halachah *sefer*, authored by Rabbi Ze'ev Hofstadter.

This *sefer* follows its own independent structure, rather than the order of the Shulchan Aruch, and contains 14 chapters on general Basar Bechalav topics, such as כלי דיני כלי שאינו בן יומם, טעות בכלים בשריים וחלביים, דרנות החום. The topic selection and order here are designed for practicality, not abstract analysis of the underlying *sugyos*.

Each chapter is divided into a number of subsections and numerous *se'ifim*. The main text states concise practical halachos, and the copious footnotes source and expound on them. For example, Chapter 5, titled דרנות החום, goes through all the *dinim* of כלי ראשון and the different forms of עירוי from it, the *dinim* of כלי שני, and then details about washing dishes in kitchen sinks, *kashering*, dishwashers, and halachos pertaining to countertops.

The volume contains detailed indexes, and provides /English translations for modern Hebrew terms in brackets, as they come up.

The structure of this book makes it best suited for use as a general summary and practical application of the halachos for those learning for *semichah*. ▲



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