

# Kosher Food

## Hazon Conference Focuses On Food And Torah

By Natasha Rosenstock

A rabbi, a nun, and a UN official walk into Hazon. No, it isn't the start of a joke.

Hazon is an increasingly visible Jewish environmental organization that recently hosted and co-sponsored the Faith in Food gathering run by the Alliance of Religions and Conservation. Its Food Conference, held earlier this

month in Falls Village, Connecticut, brought together food activists from every corner of the Jewish community and every area of food production, consumption and activism.

Ari Hart, co-founder of Uri L'Tzedek and a rabbinical student at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, insisted we can't let the discussion and action involving some of the most pressing moral issues of our generation occur outside the realm of Torah.

"Our goal is to show the whole world how profoundly the Torah thinks about the issues that matter most," he said. "We are inspired by Rav Soloveitchik, who wrote in Halakhic Man that 'the actualization of the ideals of justice and righteousness is the pillar of fire which halakhic man follows.'"

Inspired by Rav Soloveitchik, Rav Kook, Rav Mordechai Breuer, Rav Salanter, Rav Hirsch and other Torah giants, Uri L'Tzedek is devoted to social justice based on Torah values. The organization is particularly focused on workers' rights in the food industry and its Tav HaYosher – what Hart called "a seal of yashrut certifying that restaurants are meeting the basic ethical and legal standards in how they treat their employees" – can now be found in 60 kosher restaurants in the U.S.

Hart said the Orthodox community has to be front and center in pushing for tzedek. "We take mitzvos ben adam l'makom very seriously in our community, as we should. But this cannot be at the expense of bein adam l'chaveiro. Food is a powerful place to start. Food production touches everything: environment, workers, immigration, health, and more.

"Given recent events, a lot of Jews are thinking about food in new ways. All kinds of Jews have been reacting positively to food justice...realizing that halacha and Torah values have profound things to say about the relationship between consumer and producer."

The average kosher consumer, according

to Hart, is starting to ask, "What obligations do we have to those who make our food? What should the relationship between kosher producers and kosher consumers look like? How can my purchasing power be used as a force for positive change?"

He concluded, "People are recognizing halachic imperatives and Torah values in ways we haven't had the opportunity to before. Together, we can bring these Torah values to the world in meaningful, concrete ways."

David Seidenberg, a Conservative rabbi and founder of neohasid.org, asked Food Conference participants why eating was the first sin in the Torah. "The rationalist view is simply that Adam and Eve disobeyed God so they were punished. But it could have been anything. Why eating?"

One Kabbalistic interpretation, he noted, is that the sin was not in eating the food, but separating the fruit from the tree when it wasn't yet ripe. Or maybe Adam and Eve weren't yet ripe to eat the fruit. "When we eat something we incorporate it into ourselves, but we also incorporate it into God." Seidenberg continued, "There's a separating and refining that goes on when we eat, physically and spiritually."

Hazon Executive Director Nigel Savage said "there are lots [of people] who say, 'I know this is a kosher animal, killed by a *shochet*, but if this food is part of the industrial food system that includes poor wages for workers, non-native food for the animals, and animals that are treated terribly, maybe in the deepest sense this isn't kosher.'"

Savage suggested the community ask itself what its vision is for the future.

"What food do we want to serve? How do we source it? How do we integrate it with our educational work; connect it to hunger and *tzedekah*? What do we serve at *Kiddush* and *simchas*? Shuls have a *kashrut* policy, but what about something more holistic? That's just beginning."

## Tnuva And Inbal Hotel Contest Winners

Tnuva and the Inbal Jerusalem Hotel announced the first set of winners of the "My Favorite Recipe" contest. Each of the winners submitted their own original recipe featuring at least one Tnuva product as a base ingredient.

The best recipe of the month is Tomer Rabi's "Cheese Croquettes." He has won a free two-night stay at the Inbal Jerusalem Hotel. In second and third place are Baruch Mishaan for his "Light & Easy Cheesecake," and Annie Tencer for her "Orange Chocolate Cake." They will each receive \$100 worth of Tnuva products.

There is still a chance to win the grand prize of a free trip to Israel, or other valuable prizes, so make sure to send your original recipe in to the Tnuva website at Tnuva.com by December 31. Winning recipes will also be posted on the website.


Judged by a panel of culinary experts, led by the Inbal Hotel's executive chef, see if your kitchen talents have got what it takes to win some gastronomic fame as well as great prizes.

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