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Ok, that explains romaine lettuce. What about spinach? I spent 40 minutes making a careful leaf-by-leaf check of a bag of Fresh Express lettuce last week and found no bugs. It used to have the O-K and then the Star-K, but now it has no hechsher at all.

charliehall | 01.12.06 - 2:06 pm | <#>

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Maybe you need to be trained to see the bugs.

Gil | [Homepage](#) | 01.12.06 - 2:08 pm | <#>

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charliehall

What is your training in bug detection? There is a miss conception that as long as I can't find the bugs there either aren't any or it is permitted because it is called not "neara lanayim". On the first you have to be trained to find them which answers the second that will cause it to become neara lanayim. Are you a mohel, schochet, also? Do you know how to check the lungs of a cow? why is this different.

Gil

What you wrote about a system being devised to remove bugs is not true. The flood washing systems were never designed to remove aphids and thrips only dirt. It is a misinformation that R' Rosen wrote it is simply not true.

yosef | 01.12.06 - 2:14 pm | <#>

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So a householder cannot be trusted to check his own vegetables? Are you claiming, like some do, that in the past in Jewish history there has been a profession of vegetable bodek? Even those who were meticulous in avoiding bugs would trust themselves (man or woman) to remove the bugs.

Jeff | 01.12.06 - 2:19 pm | <#>

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I can't comment on what was all I can comment on what is now. A video is in the process of being made to be given out free of charge showing all the bugs.

yosef | 01.12.06 - 2:24 pm | <#>

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Gil

There are no few year records showing the effectiveness of the machines, where can I see them? This is another myth. I can send you records from plants that mashgachim checked every week showing the bugs.

yosef | 01.12.06 - 2:31 pm | <#>

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R. J. David Bleich gives a pretty thorough overview of the literature on bugs in his recent article in Tradition about NYC water. Recommended reading.

Gil | [Homepage](#) | 01.12.06 - 2:35 pm | <#>

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Gil

Another correction, not only was fresh express checked at these meetings but other brands also and they were all found to be bug infested. In fact KAJ which gave a hechser on romaine/spinach removed it years ago from Dole because they saw the problem. The only holdout was the star k from all the agencies, why?

yosef | 01.12.06 - 2:37 pm | <#>

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So let me get this straight: The Torah assures us from eating insects which are visible to the naked eye - that is, the naked eye of a **trained inspector**? Are you saying that Hashem has been holding people accountable for something that they can't ordinarily be expected to perceive? And if, as Yosef insinuates, things are different now than they have been in the past, in what way are they different? Are there new types of bugs? Back when I was in yeshiva and I was given the job of checking lettuce (both in yeshiva and at the home of a very chashuve baal habayis in Brooklyn), no one insisted that I be trained in insect detection. When did that change?

alterbentzion | 01.12.06 - 2:38 pm | <#>

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It's been claimed that eyesight has gotten worse because of artificial light. Not that it has been studied scientifically.

Gil | [Homepage](#) | 01.12.06 - 2:42 pm | <#>

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alterbentzion

The torah tells us to check lungs of a cow are you telling me someone has to be trained for that?

yosef | 01.12.06 - 2:54 pm | <#>

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It has also been claimed that orthodox Jews have worse eyesight because of our endless poring over texts.

So, wait, doesn't this mean that our study actually prevents us from detecting bugs which we otherwise might have seen? And hence, isn't Torah study actually placing a stumbling block before the blind as it makes you actually go blind. Double whammy!

1.5 opinions | 01.12.06 - 2:55 pm | <#>

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*It's been claimed that eyesight has gotten worse because of artificial light. Not that it has been studied scientifically.*

if anything, the proliferation of glasses means we probably see better than we used to??? And lets say everyone's eyesight did get worse, so some bugs which used to be visible are no longer visible. Are you saying that since they *used to be* visible they are called nir'e le'ainayim???

anony | 01.12.06 - 3:17 pm | <#>

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Its an issue of being scrupulos because we aren't certain where the line is to be drawn.

See Rabbi Bleich's article. He discusses there the gemmara which talks about how far shepards were able to see, certainly further than we can today even with glasses. However, there is a distinction which can be made between distance vision, and resolution so even if they could see further than we there is no demonstrable proof that they could see and discriminate between very tiny things.

x | 01.12.06 - 3:51 pm | <#>

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I would guess that back in the old days everyone checked their own vegetables, and everyone was an "expert" of sorts. Now we rely on other people to do the checking, so we've lost the ability to recognize them well.

This phenomenon is well known (in general, not with specific regards to bugs.)

IchLochZichOse | 01.12.06 - 4:32 pm | <#>

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It's been claimed that eyesight has gotten worse because of artificial light. Not that it has been studied scientifically.

Gil

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So Nireh lenayim is determined by eyesight at time of matan torah (like treifot?)

KT

joel rich | 01.12.06 - 5:07 pm | <#>

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Gil,

Did they show them bugs or open fresh bags and check them there?

DNA | 01.12.06 - 7:00 pm | <#>

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"So let me get this straight: The Torah assures us from eating insects which are visible to the naked eye - that is, the naked eye of a trained inspector? Are you saying that Hashem has been holding people accountable for something that they can't ordinarily be expected to perceive? And if, as Yosef insinuates, things are different now than they have been in the past, in what way are they different? Are there new types of bugs? Back when I was in yeshiva and I was given the job of checking lettuce (both in yeshiva and at the home of a very chashuve baal habayis in Brooklyn), no one insisted that I be trained in insect detection. When did that change?"

When Orthodoxy lost it's mind.

Anyway, IIRC, the whole neireh leynayim concept was made up by r' moshe anyway, using such rigorous logic as: if the chamor of r' pinchas ben yair didn't sin then surely the tzadikim themselves couldn't have sinned by eating invisible bacteria. Basically, modern science would render kashrus moot entirely unless r' moshe made something up.

DNA | 01.12.06 - 7:04 pm | <#>

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"the whole neireh leynayim concept was made up by r' moshe anyway"

made up? it's the pashtus

Anonymous | 01.12.06 - 7:34 pm | <#>

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*Did they show them bugs or open fresh bags and check them there?*

The latter.

*Anyway, IIRC, the whole neireh leynayim concept was made up by r' moshe anyway*

Read R. Bleich's article.

Gil | [Homepage](#) | 01.12.06 - 8:16 pm | <#>

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Yosef:

Of course there are areas where a trained eye is needed - mar'os nashim is another good example. But in such matters I assume that there's a **mesora** that a trained eye is needed...

alterbentzion | 01.12.06 - 9:43 pm | <#>

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Like CharlieHall, I recently spent a great amount of time checking a bag of Spinach.

I decided not to wash and spin the Spinach, as I usually do and go straight to the checking to find out if I am seeing what everyone else is apparantly seeing.

Well, 45 minutes later, after holding each individual piece of Spinach up to the florescent light in my kitchen and then holding up the other side of the leaf up to the same light, not a single bug was found of detected. And, I was wearing my most recent prescription.

I may have never been "trained" in bug checking. But, I can distinguish between various shades of dark colors (such as navy blue and black), and if I can see that my husbands pants do not match his socks from the balcony of the women's section, I have to wonder why I can't find the bugs that are so prevelant in the packaged salads.

SephardiLady | 01.12.06 - 10:12 pm | <#>

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" Maybe you need to be trained to see the bugs. "

Is it the blue pill or the red pill that lets you see them, Morpheus?

And once you're trained, can you see shaydim as well?

Are shaydim neereh liaynayim? Are you over any lavin if you eat a shayd?

These, and many more fascinating questions answered in R' Student's future posts.

DNA | 01.12.06 - 11:25 pm | <#>

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*"The only holdout was the star k from all the agencies, why?"*

Because the Star-K was paskening according to halakha, not according to the insane humrot concocted by people like yosef.

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As for our "worsening eyesight," the Torah permits people to check for bugs who needed glasses but did not have them because glasses did not exist yet. Even so, RJDB wants us to believe the stories about how far a shepherd could see? Please. Maybe they could see so far because there was little air pollution. Maybe because they were standing on high places looking down. Maybe a dozen other things, **including that they really did not see that far.**

Go buy your microscopes, get your bug-checking training and throw your sechel out the window.

Shmarya | [Homepage](#) | 01.12.06 - 11:56 pm | <#>

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I don't think that ad hominum attacks on anyone who is machmir about anything is particularly helpful, or advances the purpose of Rabbi Student's blog. And DNA, if you don't believe in kashrus laws at all and believe that they have been rendered "moot" or are "made up," I'm not sure what interest you have in this post anyway.

With respect to the issue at hand, I have always relied on whatever hashgachos were on the bag and have not checked the romaine lettuce salads. However, given that in my house, it is not uncommon for us to go through two or three bags a week, I would imagine that I would have at least come across ONE bug over the ten plus years since the bagged lettuces have become so ubiquitous, if there was an infestation problem. In fact, every time I see a dot of some sort and examine it, it invariably turns out to be a speck of black pepper from the salad dressing, or a dark spot on the leaf, or some such, but never a bug.

Vladimir | 01.13.06 - 10:26 am | <#>

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Vladimir,

No, no. You have it all wrong. I don't believe that kashrus laws were made up. I believe that R' Moshe's heter of neereh l'aynayim was made up. In fact, I urge you to be machmir and cease breathing in those tiny microbes.

Note: This is not an "ad hominum" attack. Please check both spelling and definition.

DNA | 01.14.06 - 7:48 pm | <#>

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Dear Gil,

Im not sure y u think R' Schachter was maykel with regards to this checking. My impression for a discussion I had with him on Chanukah was that he was at that meeting about 4 years ago and he agreed with the rov of the organizations there and disagreed with R' Heineman. Check with him again to make sure.

brad | 01.15.06 - 7:19 am | #

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