



GIVING BACK

Papa Ben's
Kitchen supports
Holocaust
remembrance

Ancient Grains
to Watch

The Kings
of Caviar



HEAVENLY ORGANICS

Creating ethical jobs in conflict-stricken regions

Growing up near the border of northern India, Amit Hooda saw how difficult life could be. That's why he works with struggling communities to produce honey.



PHOTO: HEAVENLY ORGANICS

Opportunity knocks... The foundation of Amit Hooda's work is the belief that ethics help bring peace. "That's what motivated us," says Hooda, to create a business model in conflict zones, "where people can make their living through ethical means instead of jumping into drug trade, arms trade and prostitution."

Two factors played a role in choosing honey as the star product. In 2005, when the company was founded, demand was growing for organic and non-GMO products. Hooda also knew the fastest route to employment was to give people work they already knew how to do. In the Himalayas, wild honey was already being harvested by local villages, and its pristine origin stood up to organic standards.

Lessons in sustainability... Existing practices for harvesting wild honey were disruptive to the environment and inefficient, so Hooda gathered experts to establish new ones. His team trained harvesters to work at night, when bees are less active, and to cut the hive in a way that left the queen bee undisturbed; they also provided protective suits to minimize injury.

"Now they get three times the money from the same hive than they used to get before," since the hive stays intact, notes Hooda.

Building credibility... Entering a conflict-stricken region with the promise of money and security wasn't an easy sell. "We were dealing with a lot of broken people who were living out of fear," Hooda explains. Some early suppliers took advantage, filling tins with bricks instead of honey, knowing that containers went unchecked. In the end, though, patience paid off.

Hooda's team sought out individuals within families—mostly women, he says—who wanted to make an honest living. "Once we empowered those conscientious people with this ethical livelihood, they pretty much changed the family," he says. "Once a few families changed, then the whole village wanted to change."

Working with farmers in northern and central India, Hooda has seen conditions vastly improve, with communities moving closer to cities, more children going to school and amenities becoming more affordable. Earnings have swelled: in the span of three months, Hooda says, a family can make five times more than what they'd previously make in a year.

Delivering accessible change... Heavenly Organics has expanded its line to include sugar, condensed milk, chocolate products, and soon an energy bar, using the Himalayan honey. Low prices are a big part of Hooda's strategy. He believes supporting social and environmental causes shouldn't be a luxury. As he puts it, "We want to be known as a company that provides healthy foods and allows every individual to fulfill their social responsibility at a very low cost."—E.M.



PAPA BEN'S KITCHEN

Promoting Holocaust education

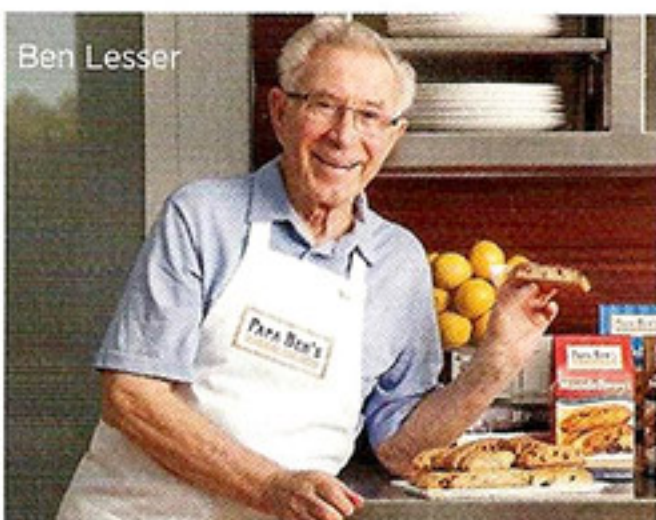
These cookies are a testament to those who survived the Auschwitz, Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps—and a way of honoring those who did not.

Keeping the memory alive... Ben Lesser, the family patriarch, was born in Poland in 1928, the son of a baker and chocolatier. Most of his family was killed in the Holocaust, but he managed to survive the Auschwitz, Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps and immigrate to the United States. He married, raised a family, had a successful real estate business and, along the way, rediscovered his passion for baking, using skills he'd learned from his father. He also spoke frequently to school and church groups about the Holocaust.

In 2008, at "Papa" Ben's 80th birthday party, his daughter Gail Lesser-Gerber gave him 1,000 commemorative pins to hand out to students and others who attended his talks. "The response was so overwhelming," says Lesser-Gerber. "After his speeches, it seemed to have so much meaning for the students to have this memento as a reminder of what they had learned, to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive."

The Los Angeles-based family established the Zachor Foundation (*zachor* means "remember" in Hebrew) to support Ben and other speakers, but realized they needed a way to finance the thousands of Zachor pins they were giving out. The solution was Papa Ben's Kitchen, which would draw on

Papa Ben's Kitchen sells mandelbroyt to finance Zachor remembrance pins for students who hear Ben Lesser speak about the Holocaust.



recipes that Ben had learned from his father. Specifically, mandelbroyt, a twice-baked almond cookie, considered the Eastern European cousin of biscotti.

An emotional reality... Lesser-Gerber immediately offered to take on the job as president of Papa Ben's Kitchen and spent days documenting measurements and watching her father's every baking step. "He did it all by touch and smell, what he remembered doing as a kid with his father," she says. "We had to get that gold standard."

Once they had their recipe, they went to work developing others flavors, including minty dark chocolate, chocolate espresso bean, lemon blueberry with poppy seeds, and spicy chipotle with ginger and dark chocolate. "A lot of Jewish bakeries sell mandelbroyt but they don't have flavor like ours," Lesser-Gerber says. "We use Maine blueberries and Belgian chocolate; almost all ingredients are organic. The cookies have a 10-month shelf-life."

Gelson's Market in Los Angeles was the first buyer, stocking its shelves in October 2012. From the beginning, tasting demos for the kosher cookie became emotional experiences. "We'd have people at our table for a long time," says Lesser-Gerber, "telling us, 'My *bubbe* used to make mandelbroyt,' 'I used to make this with my mother,' 'My grandmother taught me how to make this.'"

It brought back memories for people who associated it with a labor of love."

Spreading the word... The family has now given out more than 100,000 Zachor Foundation pins. Total sales of Papa Ben's mandelbroyt have not yet been compiled, but several Whole Foods outlets in California are selling them as well as Smith's in Las Vegas. Soon, the cookies will come to the Midwest and East Coast. The family influence continues as Ben's granddaughter Jenica, 30, is head of sales and marketing.

Ben, who is now 85, continues to do speaking engagements and still bakes almost every weekend. "He wanted to leave a bigger footprint—bigger than him," Lesser-Gerber explains. "He feels that both the Zachor Foundation and mandelbroyt are the way to do it."—J.B.



Now as tasty on the outside as they are on the inside.

John Wm. Macy introduces tasty new packaging for his famous CheeseCrisps, SweetSticks and CheeseSticks. Now these delicious boxes of all natural snacks with fresh sourdough, fine cheeses and spices look as crisp as they taste!

John Wm. Macy's®
CheeseSticks
cheesesticks.com

John Wm. Macy's®
CheeseCrisps
Asiago & Cheddar
Aged Cheese and Sourdough Squares
NET WT. 4.5 OZ. (127g)
ALL NATURAL / MADE IN USA

John Wm. Macy's®
SweetSticks
Java Cinnamon
Twice-baked Crispy Dessert Twists
NET WT. 5 OZ. (142g)
ALL NATURAL / MADE IN USA

John Wm. Macy's®
CheeseSticks
Dijon Swiss
Aged Cheese and Sourdough Twists
NET WT. 4 OZ. (113g)
ALL NATURAL / MADE IN USA