Halachos of Daily Living

Can I Use Flavored Charcoal Briquettes for My Barbecue?

Rav Belsky, *zt"l* held that one may not use wine soaked wood chips or charcoal briquettes that contain wine flavors. Although the briquettes do not directly touch the food and are burned up in the fire; nevertheless, they release an aroma which impacts the food. Not only is it forbidden to drink non-kosher wines, but it is forbidden to derive benefit from them as well. Although *Rama* (*Yoreh De'ah*123:1) writes that nowadays if one is a facing a situation of loss, one may be lenient with regard to deriving benefit from non-kosher wine, this leniency does not permit one to use these briquettes *l'chatchila*, in the first instance, since this does not involve a situation of loss. Other flavored briquettes such as hickory and smoke do not pose a problem. They are unlikely to contain any non-kosher ingredients, and even if they did, Shulchan Aruch (*Yoreh De'ah* 108:1) rules that although it is improper to allow a kosher food to absorb a non-kosher aroma, it will not make the food non-kosher.