In an ongoing effort to keep food processing on a high level of quality, a new position known as Director of Food Safety has been created in the Quality Assurance departments of food processors. In fact, there is a relatively new certification program that companies under go known as SQF certification. SQF stands for Safe Quality Food, and there are different levels of SQF certification: 1, 2 or 3.

SQF standards are very rigorous, some may say bordering on excessive. However, the repercussions can be devastating if a company’s production environment is compromised or unsanitary. A common nemesis to food producers that Quality Assurance valiantly tries to battle is the presence of E-coli, bacteria comprised of many different strains that are commonly found in one’s intestines. Most are harmless, yet there are some E-coli that can cause severe food poisoning.

When the bagged salad industry was in its fledgling stage, Ecoli food poisoning was traced back to a bagged spinach producer. This caused industry-wide panic. Another incident was traced to a famous lettuce producer who did not take proper precautions with its H-Vac (air conditioning) system. Due to improper maintenance, Ecoli subsequently found its way to romaine and iceberg lettuce and was responsible for many reports of food poisoning and even death. Listeria is another type of bacteria that can be found in uncooked poultry or other raw food products. It can be quite harmful if someone is infected with this food-borne bacterium.

For these and other reasons, there is no place in the world of food processing for substandard or unsanitary food production. In fact, STAR-K certifies Intralytix, a biotechnology company focused on food safety, sanitation and other products developed to control bacterial pathogens for many reports of food poisoning and even death. Listeria is another type of bacteria that can be found in uncooked poultry or other raw food products. It can be quite harmful if someone is infected with this food-borne bacterium.

For these and other reasons, there is no place in the world of food processing for substandard or unsanitary food production. In fact, STAR-K certifies Intralytix, a biotechnology company focused on food safety, sanitation and other products developed to control bacterial pathogens in a food processing setting. The Torah is passionate concerning health and safety in general, and food safety in particular. Based on the pasuk, “אֵֽתָנֵן הַשָּׁמֶר ְלָךְ וְשָׁמֶר נַפְּשֵׁךְ מָדָּע”: “Only be careful and watch yourselves closely,” one is to exercise spiritual as well as physical watchfulness. There is discussion amongst the commentaries regarding risk-taking, personal safety and being careful to maximize food safety and a high standard of hygiene in food establishments.

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Although the argument can be made that Hashem watches over the unaware, the truth is that Chazal tell us, we don’t count on miracles. Halacha is quite insistent about not taking risks and chances with one’s health and well-being. In fact, there is another aspect to health, well-being and taking health risks. Chazal tell us that G-d is not a schoolmaster, we should be careful to avoid dangerous situations that can pose health threats to life and limb. Of course, there are the “no brainers” – walking alone in a dangerous neighborhood or climbing a high tree while untethered. Moreover, there is a whole area that transcends the obvious areas of risk known as “halachic” health precautions.

Volumes have been written regarding the subject of well-being and health risks. Some of the most well-known areas of discussion include mixing fish and meat, leaving peeled onions, garlic and eggs overnight, uncovered beverages and leaving food and beverages under a bed or stroller. There are many “hanhagos” that are commonly practiced and many that are not.

The following stringent guidelines reflect STAR-K policy and the psakim of HaRav Moshe Heinemann, shlit’a, Rabbinic Administrator of STAR-K.

I. Mixing Meat & Fish

Chazal maintain that mixing fish and meat is forbidden.5 Worcestershire sauce often lists anchovies as one of its ingredients. Sometimes, kosher certification categorizes the Worcestershire sauce as Kosher-Fish, and other times as Kosher-Parve. The difference is the percentage of fish in the recipe. If the amount is greater than 1.6%, then the Worcestershire sauce may not be used to flavor meat or chicken; when it is less than 1.6%, it is permissible.6

Although according to most authorities it is permissible to cook meat in a fish pot or fry fish in a meat pan, it is STAR-K policy to follow the opinion of “Rav Moshe Feinstein” and require caterers to have separate utensils for meat and fish. In the event that fish was cooked in a meat pot or vice versa, it is more lenient. STAR-K policy is to be more lenient. Halachically, there is no difference between cooking, roasting or broiling.

Similarly, it is forbidden to cook fish and meat uncovered in the same oven even if they are dry, due to bishul. However, if one of the dishes is covered, meat and fish may be prepared in the same oven.7

II. Peeled Onion, Garlic and Eggs

The Gemara states that it is forbidden to leave peeled onions, garlic, harsh boiled eggs, cracked eggs, (whites or yolks) overnight unless the head whiskers of the onion and garlic clove are intact, the skin of the unused onion or the peel of the unused garlic is intact, or the egg is in its shell. It does not help to cover the eggs, onion or garlic in a container. However, if they are mixed in a salad or if they are salted they may be kept overnight.8

Do the same restrictions apply to chopped or peeled raw onions, garlic or cracked eggs that have been left overnight? Some authorities say they do, and some are lenient in this regard based on a ruling by Rav Moshe Feinstein, z”l. He stated that since the custom of not leaving peeled onions, garlic and eggs overnight is not mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch, we are permitted to be more lenient with peeled raw products from a factory or industrial setting. It is STAR-K policy to follow the ruling of Rav Moshe Feinstein, z”l.

III. Food & Beverages Under A Bed

It is forbidden to put food under a bed, whether open or closed, cooked or raw. The food becomes forbidden if someone slept in the bed. Included in this prohibition is leaving food under a stroller in which a baby fell asleep.9 In the event food was unintentionally left unattended, the food is permitted. Another way to reverse the status of forbidden food is to wash Negel Vasser directly over the food or tovel it in a mikvah.10

IV. Uncovered Beverages

In previous eras, it was forbidden to drink water or other uncovered beverages that were left unattended. The reason for this prohibition was that there was a she’er, a concern, that a snake would drink the water and deposit venomous poison in the water. Since snakes are not as commonly found today, the minhag is to be more lenient. However, there are other authorities who are still strict with the laws of כיוון, uncovered liquids which include water, milk, olive oil and wine. The timeframe in which to forbid uncovered liquids is three seconds.11

As we know, the Torah mandates us to emulate G-d. Just as the Ribono Shel Olam is ש”כ, so too should we emulate Him. Just as we follow the laws of kashrus unwaveringly without question or compromise so, too, the laws of mishmar should be treated with the same sanctity and zeal.12
2. One may discuss plans to take place after Shabbos if no melachah is involved. For instance, one may say, “I will walk over to your house tomorrow.” Since this can be done on Shabbos, it may be discussed on Shabbos. It is also permitted to say, “I will come over to your house tomorrow,” even if the house is 20 miles away, since a melachah was not stated and it is possible to walk.

3. One may discuss something “potentially” permissible on Shabbos. For example, if someone lives in a city with no eruv he may say, “I will bring some pictures to your house tomorrow.” Since this activity could be performed if that city had an eruv, it is permissible to make such a statement on Shabbos.7

4. An extension of the previous halacha allows one who resides in a city to say, “Tomorrow, I am going to another city” (e.g., someone in Lakewood may say he is going to Baltimore on Sunday). Although there are at least two prohibitions involved in this activity – driving a car and leaving the tchum – such a statement would be permitted since he did not say he is driving.8 Furthermore, one could theoretically walk to another city using a route if it would be built up with burgerin,9 so that it falls within the tchum. Therefore, someone in Los Angeles may say, “I am going to New York tomorrow.”10

5. If the melachah is about performing a dvar mitzvah, one may discuss it if necessary.11 For example, if it were necessary on Shabbos to discuss specific travel arrangements for attending a levaya in order to avoid “losing a ride,” one may discuss this on Shabbos. Although this activity is a melachah, it is permitted to discuss since it involves a mitzvah.

II. Speaking About Business

One may not speak about business issues on Shabbos. This includes the following:12

1. Prices – One may not discuss the price of various items with someone who can utilize this as business information. This applies to a “big ticket item” (e.g., “The house around the block is selling for $500,000”) or one of lesser value (e.g., “Cookies at the kosher market are on sale for $1.00”), or any case in between. This includes prices on almost any item – food, travel, household items, etc.13

This also includes conversations about free items including, “If you want a free round trip ticket to Erez Yisroel you can get one on United Airlines if you have 85,000 frequent flyer miles.” Generally, speaking about stocks, bonds, mutual funds, banks and credit cards is forbidden even without mentioning specific financial information.

2. In general, one may not give “business advice” on Shabbos. An accountant may not discuss financial matters with a client or anyone else. Asking an accountant for tax advice on Shabbos (e.g., “Can I count my married child as a dependent if her chasunah was last December?”) is not permitted. This also applies to asking a mechanic for automobile advice (e.g., “What do you recommend for squeaky brakes?”) or a computer expert for recommendations (e.g., “What is the best program for graphics?”). Furthermore, one may not make certain calculations,14 especially those related to business. For example, one may not say “I bought a tie for you which cost twenty dollars plus 5% tax. So the total amount you owe me is twenty dollars plus one dollar tax, or twenty-one dollars.”15

If someone asks you something that is prohibited to discuss on Shabbos you should not discuss such issues. The correct response is to say, “Let’s speak after Shabbos.” One should not respond, “Let’s speak about it” after Shabbos.

3. The following situations are exceptions and may be discussed during Shabbos, even though they are financial or business related:

a. Tzedakah Matters – This is a heter for the gabbai to announce nedavos (donations declared following aliyos), as this financial discussion is for the purpose of tzedakah. Calculations for tzedakah and other mitzvos are also allowed.

b. Public Affairs – Something that will benefit the general public is permitted. An example is a city engineer who comes on Shabbos to survey the area in order to install a traffic light and crosswalk in an area frequented by the tzibbur (e.g., outside the shul). In such a case, one may speak with the engineer about the project as it will benefit the entire community.

c. If one’s “business” is teaching Torah or other divrei mitzvos, then one may discuss such topics on Shabbos. For example, one...
may speak to his son’s rabbi or teacher on Shabbos regarding how his child is performing in shiur. He may hire a tutor17 to teach Torah, provided salary is not discussed on Shabbos. One may also discuss shiduchim on Shabbos. One may even say “support will be available.” Some opinions allow even specific financial arrangements for the shiduch to be discussed on Shabbos.18 Consult your rav.

Likewise, one may ask a kashrus professional for advice (e.g., “Can I eat this product that has no hechsher?”). One may also speak with others who work for chesed organizations (e.g., asking a member of the Bikur Cholim organization about a hospital).

d. Health care professionals may give advice on Shabbos (but may not discuss related financial issues). This includes speaking to one’s doctor or two doctors who are conferring about a medical technique or issue. Nurses and occupational, physical or speech therapists, etc., may discuss health issues or techniques for helping others. They may also speak to a patient who is seeking their advice on Shabbos.

III. Miscellaneous Cases

1. One should avoid sharing sad news or something that brings tzara (distress)19 on Shabbos, unless it is necessary. For example, on Shabbos one should not tell his friend, “Did you hear that Ploni died?” However, one may tell a relative or someone who is involved if they need to know (e.g., “Your uncle, who was my neighbor, was niftar this morning. I think your cousins would appreciate if you came over on Shabbos morning.”)

2. One may ask a shayla or “speak in learning” regarding a case that involves business (e.g., asking a rav, Reuven is lending Shimon $10,000 and would like to charge 5% interest. How should I tell him to set up a heter iska?”)

3. Thinking about a melachah or business (birur) is permissible; however, for oneg Shabbos it is best to avoid doing so.20

4. Similar prohibitions apply to Yom Tov, as well. However, there are “exceptions” in the case of Yom Tov:

a. On Yom Tov, one may discuss a melachah that is permissible on Yom Tov, even if it is forbidden on Shabbos. For instance, one may not say on Shabbos, “Let’s bake a cake after Shabbos.” However, on Yom Tov one may say, “Let’s bake a cake after Yom Tov.” This is because under certain conditions, it is permissible to bake on Yom Tov.

b. On Yom Tov, one may discuss non-melachah prohibitions related to that particular Yom Tov (e.g., on Yom Kippur one may say, “I know you find fasting difficult, before Yom Tov I brought food for you to eat immediately after Havdalah in shul.”).

It is noteworthy that the restriction of Daber Davar is the basis for the prohibition of muktzeh on Shabbos. According to the Rambam,21 Chazal realized that if “business speech”, which is intangible, was prohibited by the Nevim on Shabbos, kal v’chomer (how much more so) would the Nevim forbid one from handling items that are related to business or have no normal Shabbos use. Furthermore, one of the reasons for the prohibition of Amira l’Akum (asking a non-Jew to perform work on Shabbos) is Daber Davar. The fact that Daber Davar is a m’kor (source) for muktzeh and Amira l’Akum illustrates the importance of how we speak on Shabbos.22

The enhancement of Shabbos through proper speech is illustrated in a story found in Sefer Ketos Hashulchan.23 A king once gave his subjects the opportunity to request their needs. A homeless individual with a skin disorder, who normally picked through garbage cans for food, approached the king with the following request. “Today there are no garbage cans available. My request is that you provide me with garbage cans through which I can rummage for food.” Everyone who heard this ridiculous request laughed and said, “You fool! The king could have had the best dermatologists treat your illness or he could have given you a house in which to live. Instead, you choose the same garbage cans from which you eat every day!”

On Shabbos, the Ribono Shel Olam grants us the opportunity to spend Shabbos in an enhanced way with divrei Torah, which spiritually and physically heal and protect us. It is a day with more time for Torah, tefillah, our families, inspiring seudos, gemilas chasadim and proper speech. Why would anyone want to treat this special day as just another day to discuss business and financial matters, as we do every other day of the week?24

17. One may even hire a teacher for mishu’d shel, such as math or science (provided salary is not discussed); because it is a mishu’d l’amein (see Molin Baras 306:50 based on Kiddushin 29a).
18. See Knesset Hashulchan 107:14
19. Molina Baras 307:3
20. S.A., O.C. 306:8
21. Hilkos Shabbos (26:12)
22. On Shabbos, when people come together at family gatherings and social events one should be extra careful in all beklachim of proper speech that are relevant every day. See Chofetz Chaim, footnote at the end of Pechos Avos (Ch 6).
23. Written by Rav Avraham Chaim Naeh, z”l, in Geshem 4: Simon 107, Ch 29 in the name of Ashel Avraham Waisbuch in the name of Toldos Yaakov Yosef.

24. One way to increase your speech about Torah and Chassidus is to take the class STAR-K’s 16th Annual Kashrus Training Program will take place July 22-25, 2019. This intensive seminar, held at STAR-K’s offices in Baltimore, Maryland, is limited to 25 students — rabbinim, kollel members and others serving as kles kodesh — who have studied Yoreh Deah.

In addition to lectures, audio-visual presentations and a hands-on practicum, several field trips are planned. STAR-K will also be running its annual Food Service Mashichim Training Seminar for people involved (or who want to get involved) in hashgacha for restaurants, catering halls, and hotels. The course will be held August 5-7, 2019.

To apply, call the STAR-K office at 410-484-4110 and speak with Rabbi Zvi Goldberg, or go to www.star-k.com to download the application form.
Happy Fact: Unflavored roasted coffee beans, whole and ground, are considered kosher without a hechsher (kosher certification). Bearing this in mind, buying a cup of unflavored regular, decaf, or High-Octane coffee (my usual choice) should not present any kashrus issues, right?

Not so fast fellow caffeine heads; life is never so simple.

The Problem: Some coffee vendors sell kosher and treif (non-kosher) items, like the Bacon & Gouda Breakfast Sandwich and the Pepperoni & Tomato Savory Foldover. The *keilim* (utensils) used for coffee and treif can be washed together, causing blios, absorbed tastes, from the *treif* kli to enter the coffee equipment. In Starbucks, for example, it’s been established that the brew basket that holds the coffee grounds while the coffee is being made is sometimes washed with *keilim* that may have come into contact with *treif*. If we have a perfect storm situation in which the wash water is *yad soledes*,2 and no soap enters the water before the *treif* equipment is placed in the water, then the brew basket is considered *treif* and the coffee made afterwards is *treif*.

We do not know the cleaning procedures used by all coffee vendors, but most of them sell *treif* items along with coffee and the possibility exists that similar *keilim* issues may be present.

Based on these facts and assumptions, the psak (balachic decision) should be that one is permitted to buy hot coffee only from vendors that he knows do not sell *treif*, or whose cleaning procedures do not impact the kashrus of the coffee. This is, indeed, STAR-K’s opinion on purchasing coffee from stores that sell *treif* items.

The Exception: True or False?

If one is traveling on the road – by car, plane, bus, or horse – he can stop at a rest stop, gas station or even a Starbucks and purchase a hot cup of Joe.

Give yourself a star if you answered True.

Upon what is this exception based?

We need some background to answer this question. Our concern centers on the *keilim* used to make coffee and/or the utensils from which one may drink that may have *blias* from *treif*.

The halacha is that tastes that are *pagan*, or off-tasting, do not have an ability to impart a *treif* status to kosher foods or utensils. The *halacha* also states that tastes absorbed in a utensil that is not a *Ben Yomo*, i.e., has not been used within 24 hours, are considered *pagan*.4 Furthermore, *Shulchan Aruch* paskens in *Yoreh Deah* (Y.D.) 122:6, that if one is unsure if the eating utensils or cooking equipment owned by non-Jews was used for non-kosher within 24 hours, one may assume that they were not. This concept is known as *Stam Keilim Einyon Bnei Yoman*, or just *Stam Keilim* in balachic shorthand. With this in mind, the *Mechor* paskens that if someone mistakenly used the pot of a non-Jew to heat up something, the food is permitted since it is assumed that the pot was not used within the past 24 hours. This is a great *din* to keep handy when faced with a b’dieved situation, like the one in the *Shulchan Aruch*.5

The question we need to answer is if buying coffee in a non-kosher establishment while traveling has the status of a b’dieved situation. This would allow us to apply the principle of *Stam Keilim* to the coffee making equipment and grant us a guilt-free cup of Starbucks (how to avoid guilt while paying $5 for a cup of coffee is beyond the scope of this article).

Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, shlit’a, answered this question by marshalling a *Yad Ephraim*6 that appears on the page in the *Shulchan Aruch* that we previously mentioned in Y.D. 122: 6. The *Yad Ephraim* references a responsa from the *Noda B’Yehudah* (N.B’Y) which discusses the propriety of Jews drinking coffee in the Gentile-owned coffeehouses of 18th century Prague. As they say, the more things change the more they stay the same! It is almost 300 years later, and Jews still want their coffee caliente.

The issue addressed by the *Noda B’Yehudah* revolved around drinking coffee from the coffeehouse’s mugs. It was assumed that the mugs had non-kosher milk in them when the Gentile patrons drank their coffee. In those days, there was no heter (permission) to drink non-cholov Yisroel milk or cholov stam and it was considered *asur*, not kosher. Since paper cups had not yet made their way onto the scene, the only way to drink the coffee was to use the mugs that had absorbed the taste of non-kosher milk. What was a Jew to do?

The Jews who drank from the mugs back then had two possible reasons why it should be allowed:

1. The mug was a *Kli Sheni*7 and, therefore, not hot enough to cause a transfer of *treif* milk taste into the coffee.
2. *Stam Keilim*. The balachic referenced earlier allows us to assume that utensils have not been used within 24 hours, and any blios are *pagan*.

The N.B’Y dismisses the Kli Sheni heter by referencing the Taz and Rashba, who pasken that this only helps in a b’dieved situation.

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1. I didn’t make these up; they are actual choices on the Starbucks menu.
2. Literally, the temperature at which someone will quickly remove his hand to avoid being burned. The food must be at least this hot before its taste is considered to have been transferred into a utensil. Rabbi Heinemann indicates that *yad soledes* is 120°F.
3. נ״א פ׳ פ׳ תקף.
4. Ibid.
5. A scenario in which the halacha allows a lenient approach to be applied.
6. נ״א פ׳ פ׳ תקף. נ בהוט 된 בלא שמן, maybe this pot was not used within 24 hours, rendering any absorbed taste *pagan* (off tasting). Even if it was used within 24 hours, maybe the absorbed non-kosher taste is *pagan* in this particular food that was cooked. פ״א פ׳ פ״ תקף. נ בהוט ליטף האב, maybe this pot was not used within 24 hours, rendering any absorbed taste *pagan* (off tasting).
7. Rabbi Ephraim Zalman Margulies ZT’L d. 1828
8. נ״א פ׳ פ׳ תקף.
9. The mug or bowl into which food from a pot on the fire is poured into is called a Kl Sheni, a second level utensil. This means that the walls of the utensil are considered to have cooled the temperature of the food to an extent where it is not hot enough to transfer its taste into the utensil walls.
Before Pesach, a person is obligated to perform bedikas chometz, a search of his house and possessions to ensure that he does not own any chometz. If he does not do so, the bedikah can be done all night. Bedieved, if he does not perform the bedikah that night he should do it on the day of the 14th of Nissan.

If he will not be home on the night of the 14th of Nissan, he should appoint another adult to perform the bedikah on his behalf. If he leaves his house within thirty days of Pesach, and is not planning to return and conduct a bedikah or have someone else perform a bedikah for him, then he should do bedikas chometz without reciting a brocha at night before he leaves.

If he leaves his house more than thirty days beforehand (i.e. the 14th of Adar or earlier) and is not planning to return for Pesach, he does not need to perform bedikas chometz and may rely on the bittel that he recites on erev Pesach at the time of chometz burning. However, he should remove or sell any known chometz in the house. If he plans to return home on Pesach and will not have someone else perform a bedikah for him, he must perform bedikas chometz before he leaves.

There is no need to check areas containing chometz which will be sold to a non-Jew before Pesach. If a person is home on the night of the 14th of Nissan but is planning to leave for the duration of Pesach, he may arrange to sell the chometz in all the rooms of his house - except one - to a non-Jew and check that room to fulfil the mitzva of bedikas chometz. (If it is his custom not to sell chometz gommon, then he should make sure that there is no chometz gommon in the other rooms). If guests will be staying in the house during Pesach and using some of the rooms, those rooms must be checked for chometz.

Guests who arrive before the night of the 14th of Nissan are obligated to check for chometz. If the owner of the house does not want them searching his house, he can perform a bedikah on the house himself and leave one area for the guests to be bedek. People staying at a hotel for Pesach should perform a bedikah on their room. If they arrive on the day of the 14th of Nissan, a bedikah should be done at that time. A brocha is not recited over the bedikah of a hotel room.

One should not begin any melachah within half an hour before tzeis hakochavim on the night of bedikas chometz. He should not eat a beitza or more of bread, cake or cookies at that time; he may eat other food. He may learn Torah but should arrange for a shomer or set an alarm to ensure that he stops for bedikas chometz. At tzeis hakochavim, he should stop whatever he is doing, no longer eat any food, and conduct the bedikah. He could daven maariv before the bedikah, although if he always daven at a specific later time he can do the bedikah first and daven at that time.

When performing bedikas chometz, one should search his house for any edible crumbs of chometz. Meikar havin, it is not necessary to clean one's house from small soiled particles of chometz which will not come into contact with food on Pesach. Nevertheless, many are stringent and attempt to rid their house of all chometz. It is not necessary to check books and seforim for chometz, although those which will be brought to the table on Pesach should be cleaned to ensure that they do not contain crumbs which could fall into one's food.

The bedikah should be conducted by the light of a candle with a single wick. Some have the custom to turn off the house lights during the bedikah. Others leave them on, using both the house lights and a candle to conduct the search. The prevailing custom is for ten pieces of bread to be placed in different areas of the house before the bedikah (although some do not have this minhag). Some people take care that each piece is smaller than a kezayim, and it is a good idea to wrap them up in order to ensure that no crumbs are left behind. The person conducting the bedikah could position the pieces of bread, but it is customary for another member of the household to do so. One may use a flashlight to aid in the search.

For the purposes of this article, we will assume that the reader is not reciting a birchas hamazon over his bread as he is checking boxes and other areas in the house. After completing his bedikah, he should perform a tefillah in shacharit or maariv which will be brought to the table on Nissan 14, as stated above. He could say tefillas beitzah before he sits down to his family meal. He should not eat any food that was left over from the previous day on Nissan 14, before sitting down to his meal to ensure that he did not eat any of the food which will be set before him on the table on Nissan 15.

During the entire period of Pesach, he should perform all melachot only on behalf of his family or guests. He should not perform any Domestic or Commercial activities on behalf of his family or guests. He should not engage in any activities that are forbidden in the melachah she'aharonah, only if it is for his family or guests.

On Nissan 15, he should perform a bedikah and may rely on the bittel that he recites on erev Pesach at the time of chometz burning. If he leaves his house more than thirty days beforehand (i.e. the 14th of Nissan), he must perform a bedikah on his behalf. If he plans to return home on Pesach and will not have someone else perform a bedikah for him, he must perform bedikas chometz before he leaves.

If he is staying at a hotel for Pesach, he should perform a bedikah there as well. He should perform the bedikah on his behalf. If he wants them searching his house, he can perform a bedikah on the house himself and leave one area for the guests to be bedek. The person conducting the bedikah should not do so on a Friday night. If he leaves his house more than thirty days beforehand (i.e. the 14th of Nissan), he must perform a bedikah on his behalf. If he plans to return home on Pesach and will not have someone else perform a bedikah for him, he must perform bedikas chometz before he leaves.

There is no need to check areas containing chometz which will be sold to a non-Jew before Pesach. If a person is home on the night of the 14th of Nissan but is planning to leave for the duration of Pesach, he may arrange to sell the chometz in all the rooms of his house - except one - to a non-Jew and check that room to fulfil the mitzva of bedikas chometz. (If it is his custom not to sell chometz gommon, then he should make sure that there is no chometz gommon in the other rooms). If guests will be staying in the house during Pesach and using some of the rooms, those rooms must be checked for chometz.

Guests who arrive before the night of the 14th of Nissan are obligated to check for chometz. If the owner of the house does not want them searching his house, he can perform a bedikah on the house himself and leave one area for the guests to be bedek. People staying at a hotel for Pesach should perform a bedikah on their room. If
The Shach writes that we need to be strict in applying the heter of Kli Sheni regarding earthenware utensils, such as the mugs that were used. The heter of Stam Keilim also doesn’t work here since he says that these mugs are certainly used daily. Therefore, the Nodah B’Yehuda states that these mugs should not be used in L’hatchila, and that whoever has it within their power to protest the practice of Jews drinking in Gentile coffeehouses should do so.10

Let’s return to the future now. We don’t need to use the non-kosher mugs in our Gentile-owned coffeehouses. We have disposable everything these days, including cups, Baruch Hashem, Yay! Order up that Starbucks Venti (20 oz size for the uninitiated)!

Not so fast.

If you recall, our 21st century issue is not mugs – it’s the washing procedures that may mix treif dishes with the coffeemaking equipment. Disposable cups won’t save us from that. “But wait,” you say. “What about Stam Keilim?” Whew, crisis averted!

Sorry for the rollercoaster of emotions I’m putting you through, but the heter of Stam Keilim applies to believed situations only, as previously mentioned.

Is all hope lost?!

No! Rabbi Heinemann, shlita, has ridden to our rescue using ten words in the Nodah B’Yehuda that we quote here, \" chuyện עם כל יד וишוע, וע"ש, Practically speaking, when someone \" רקע בלעדיות בדר perpetrator who states\".

10. The actual words of the NBY are illustrative of how serious he felt this issue was; membibbenu, אשה היי בני תורה ידע רום מעלתו, אם הם בני תורה אינם בני יראה והמה קלי דעת.

11. The fact that the treif dishes are not washed with the coffee equipment every day allows us to avoid the issue the Shach mentioned earlier, that the mugs could not be allowed based on ל”ס א”ע since they are used daily with non-kosher milk.

Drinking Coffee on the Road

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when someone is traveling and is in a place where no kosher utensils are available, he is considered to be in a believed situation and he may use the gentile owned mugs. The Nodah B’Yehuda allows the use of the mugs based on the heter of Kli Sheni because traveling is a believed situation. Rabbi Heinemann applies the same lomdus (thinking) to our modern coffeehouse issue. He says when someone is on the road traveling, he is considered to be in a believed situation. Based on our investigations, we also know that the treif dishes are not always washed with the coffee equipment. Therefore, we can use the heter of Stam Keilim since we are in a believed situation. One Venti House Blend coming up!

While you are savoring your caffeine-fix, let me remind you of a few caveats. Once you get home, it’s back to Moish’s Coffee Café for you. You are no longer considered to be in a believed situation; you’re back in L’hatchila12 Land, and non-kosher coffee places should be avoided unless you know clearly that no treif utensils are washed with the coffee equipment.

Bear in mind that even while traveling, you can only order regular or decaf coffee and a Latte made with cholov Yisroel if you don’t keep Cholov Yisroel. Frappuccinos and other similar flavored coffee creations contain additional ingredients that need to be reviewed before they can be recommended.

Happy Trails!

Bedikas Chometz

Search for Dough Like a Pro

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areas, one should remember to check clothing pockets, handbags, strollers, car seats, children’s knapsacks, pet cages, fish tanks, pet and garages. One should ensure that vacuum bags containing chometz are discarded and that garbage cans are cleaned. Areas which were thoroughly cleaned beforehand do not need to be scrutinized at the time of bedikas chometz.23 For example, clothing pockets which were cleaned and checked beforehand do not need to be rechecked during bedikas chometz.24 However, the person conducting the bedikab should inquire and verify that all the pockets were, in fact, cleaned.25 One should remove or sell all chometz at his workplace. If he owns the workplace, he should perform bedikas chometz, preferably on the night of the 14th of Nissan.

One is not obligated to move a heavy piece of furniture to check behind it for chometz.26 However, if it is known that chometz is present it is customary to remove it if possible.27 One is not obligated to check areas of the house into which chometz is never brought. However, those areas do need to be checked if children live in the house and could reach them.28

One should not speak between the brocha and the beginning of the bedikab. During the bedikab he should preferably speak only about things related to the search. If he did speak about non-related matters after starting the bedikab, he does not repeat the brocha.29 If he goes to the bathroom during the bedikab, he may recite Asher Yotzar.30 At the conclusion of the bedikab, he should say Kol Chamira.31

One may speak about non-related matters while having a conversation that is not connected to the search. However, if the conversation is not related to the search, and he starts talking about non-related matters, he does not recite the brocha.32 If he asks about non-related matters while having a conversation that is connected to the search, and he starts talking about non-related matters, he does not recite the brocha.33 If he asks about non-related matters while having a conversation that is not connected to the search, and he starts talking about non-related matters, he does not recite the brocha.34

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FIRST EVER PAN-ASIA KOSHER TRAINING SEMINAR

Margie Pensak

They come from Perth, Yerushalayim; Mumbai; Manila; Boston; Scottsdale; and Los Angeles, but truly the mahsheyim attending the inaugural STAR-K Pan-Asia Kosher Training Seminar in Shanghai, January 9-14, live out of their suitcases. Dedicated to the mission of ensuring and spreading kashrus, these STAR-K mashgiachim are from wherever their luggage happens to be.

Representing the premier kosher certifier in Asia, these STAR-K mashgiachim are the “eyes and ears” in the field who help certify thousands of products—from canned goods and nori sheets in China and South Korea, to spices and coconut products in India and Sri Lanka, and banana chips and coco sugar in the Philippines—mostly exported as “bulk” ingredients to be processed globally into consumer products.

STAR-K operates regional support centers in Shanghai, China and Cochín, India and representative offices in Manila, Philippines; Colombo, Sri Lanka; Karachi, Pakistan; and Jakarta, Indonesia.

Joining Baltimore-based STAR-K Kosher Administrators Rabbi David Heber and Rabbi Avrohom Mushell were Amos Benjamin and Joel Weinberger, who run the STAR-K Far East and India/Sri Lanka offices, respectively. STAR-K mashgiachim Rabbi Jonathan Goldschmidt, Yosef Wexler, Yitzchok Kaufman, Nosson Levin, Aryeh Mendoza, Eli Putney, Ariel Stein, Yosef Wexler, and Shmuel Zvuloni also attended. For some, it was the first time they were able to put a face to the voice after much telecommunication.

Seminar topics covered were: Plant report development; rabbinical prohibitions in kosher law; insect removal from vegetables—process and methodology; the International Dateline and possible time issues when traveling; mahsheyim and STAR-K office personnel paired up to inspect factories. Seminar highlights included: a Shabbaton and Malach Yisroel shiur; an interactive SKYPE visit with STAR-K Rabbinical Administrator HaRav Moshe Heinemann, shlit”a; and an evening walking tour of Jewish Shanghai.

Rabbi Yosef Wexler, who traveled from Yerushalayim to attend, mentioned in his letter to STAR-K President Avrom Pollak, “As I go back into the field today, it is with renewed energy after the inspiring few days that I spent in Shanghai with Rabbi Mushell, Rabbi Heber and the incredible team of STAR-K Asia Pacific. All the shiurim and events were informative and inspiring. The Q & A session with Rabbi Mushell was an important opportunity for us in the field to discuss face-to-face with our Kashrus Administrator various issues that come up in the factories. Rabbi Heber’s shiur on zmanim and the International Dateline helped me gain a clear picture and practical guidelines in this complicated area of halacha often encountered by the traveling mahsheyim. However, without a doubt, the highlight was the Q & A session with the Rav HaMachshir Rabbi Heinemann, shlit”a. It was a tremendous zechus to ask various shailos to such an adom gadol. The Rav answered all our shailos at length with tremendous insight and depth and even a little humor sprinkled in. Yasher kovach!”

Participant Aryeh Mendoza, from Manila, concluded, “To date, this was the most impactful weekend of my career. I now truly recognize the amazing people I work with, and we all gained a deeper understanding of the holy work in which we are involved.”

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