

Let's Talk גליין ג' קיץ תשפ"ב Kashrus

For the Educated Consumer

*Food
— FOR —
Thought*

It is our privilege to be able to spread the message of viewing food through the lens of Torah. B'chasdei Hashem, with the launch of the **Let's Talk Kashrus** series, what started off as the seed of an idea became a global movement, bringing about an inspiring amount of engagement from communities around the world.

Our hope is to b'ezeras Hashem to inspire more people, more communities across the globe to continue this movement of chizzuk in shmiras kashrus.

The **Kashrus Awareness Project** remains committed to making kashrus part of the conversation in our community, and to lay the groundwork for consumers to make informed decisions.

לא רעב ללהם, לא צמא למים,
כי אם לשמוע את דברי ה'

We invite your questions, comments, and feedback. If there's a specific kashrus topic you'd like to bring to public attention, feel free to contact us by email:

info@kashrusawareness.com

Message or call: 678-8-Kosher

 **Join the Whatsapp Group**

You can also visit our website www.KashrusAwareness.com for a growing list of resources, timely conversations, and to watch the debut episodes of the **Let's Talk Kashrus** audio-visual series.



Produced by:
HEART.WORKS

The hot summer days bring all sorts of exciting refreshing drinks... and with them a plethora of contemporary halachic concerns. A little bit of education can go a long way in ensuring the kashrus of your next Starbucks coffee run.

The following is a loose transcription of an insightful conversation between Rabbi Yitzchok Hisiger and Rabbi Sholem Fishbane, Kashrus Administrator for the Chicago Rabbinical Council, and the Executive Director of AKO. Enjoy the Q&A in which they discuss a rather un-refreshing discovery. View it in its original form at www.KashrusAwareness.com

Rabbi Yitzchok Hisiger: Thank you Rabbi Fishbane for joining us again. Another popular topic is Refreshers from Starbucks. Yes, no, maybe? What's the story?

Rabbi Sholem Fishbane: So, believe it or not, "Refreshers" mean a lot of things.

There's not one answer that all refreshers are off the table. But, the more popular ones are actually problematic, and I'll tell you a story. A couple months back, one of my cousins texted me, "Are Starbucks Refreshers kosher?" I wrote back, "No." She wrote back, "Well, my friends are all drinking it." I typed back, "It's still not kosher." She asks, "Why not?" I wrote back, "Because it has white grape juice concentrate." Her next response jolted me — it was a good wake up call — she wrote back, "What's wrong with that?"

I was stunned! Because you know how it is when you're in an industry and you take for granted that everybody else is familiar with the things that you are? If you're in computers, you assume that surely everybody else knows what a motherboard is. So I explained to her the concept of *stam yeinam* that pertains to grape juice and Baruch Hashem, she and her friends switched their "Refreshers" to something halachically more refreshing.

But, I started asking around, and I found that so many of our Bais Yaakov girls and our yeshiva graduates didn't know that grape juice is a highly sensitive kashrus ingredient. It is used widely in many products, especially in products being manufactured with lower sugar content. In cookies for example, they'll throw it in because it gives it some sweetness; my inquiries revealed to me that the oilem just don't know it's not kosher.

The white grape juice concentrate is part of the drink's base, you won't see it of course,

One of the things that they'll throw into a refresher many times is a cut lime or lemon. Since it's a *davar charif*, it has to be under supervision.

but it's there. It can also show up in Starbucks' lemonade.

Rabbi Hisiger: You won't see anyone squeezing grapes in the store.

continued →

Coming Soon

Dinner Plans Are Up in the Air

An in-depth discussion with Rabbi Moshe Elefant, Chief Operating Officer of OU Kosher, addressing the topic of airplane meals.



HOSTED BY:
Rabbi Yitzchok Hisiger



GUEST:
Rabbi Moshe Elefant

First-Class Meals

R' Moshe Elefant, R' Yitzchok Hisiger



Let's Talk
Kashrus



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Rabbi Sholem Fishbane: Exactly, but since we know what the ingredients are, we're familiar with the issue and it's something people are simply not aware of.

I have had many instances where I walked into Starbucks and saw *unzere menschen* sipping Refreshers and I'd go over to them and tell them, "Listen, I don't like to intrude, but I must tell you that this drink is not kosher." And they're shocked.

I will also tell you, one of the things that they'll throw into a refresher many times is a cut lime or lemon. Since it's a *davar charif*, ('a sharp item') it has to be under supervision. A *davar charif* cut with a knife that's not kosher becomes non-kosher.

Rabbi Hisiger: That touches upon the whole Starbucks keilim issue, pertaining to the utensils being used behind the counter.

Rabbi Fishbane: Oh, that's a whole other topic. We could be here for hours just to talk about that... While there's much to be enjoyed at Starbucks for the kosher consumer, there are also a host of other issues to be aware of, many of which are really major problems.

I'll add another thing. It's also a different topic but since you mentioned squeezing grape juice, it brought to mind another important issue.

You know, sometimes you go into these supermarkets and they'll prepare a freshly squeezed fruit drink for you? They'll take the orange, a pineapple or whatever and that can possibly be fine. However, if they're also adding grapes to the mix, and they're making juice for you, that's actually *stam yeinam* right in front of your eyes! You'd think it's fresh, what can be wrong?

Rabbi Hisiger: So, *limaaseh*, stay away from refreshers?

Rabbi Fishbane: Yes, and also understand



why. We need education about what goes into our foods. Just because you see that someone else is drinking it, doesn't give it a stamp of approval. People are *pashut* unaware of the issues.

I mentioned the story to a friend of mine, and he says, "Oh my, I drink that! Whenever my wife goes to a Starbucks I ask her to bring one home too." His wife was also shocked. She said, "I didn't know! All my friends have been drinking it."

So, association and thinking that just because other people are enjoying something, it's automatically kosher — that's one of the problems that we're trying to tackle. And thanks for bringing awareness to this, R' Yitzchok. People have to understand what it is that goes on behind the scenes, and then they'll have a different *mehalech*, a different outlook, and hopefully we'll all keep a higher level of *Kashrus*.

Rabbi Hisiger: We want to help the consumer become "an educated consumer". Rabbi Fishbane, thank you for enlightening us.

Rabbi Fishbane: Thank you.

- Venti
- Refresher
- 1 Sugar in the Raw
- Lemonade
- 1 oz. Yayin Nesech?

Did You Know: In addition to other potential Kashrus *shailos*, Starbucks' Refreshers contain white grape juice concentrate, which is *stam yeinam*.

Double Check: *Is it Kosher?*

Watch the latest episodes of Let's Talk Kashrus:

www.KashrusAwareness.com

