

בית הוראה דיעטראיט
BAIS HORAAH OF DETROIT
HALACHA HOTLINE

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF HaRav Shmuel Irons שליט"א VAAD HALACHA Rav Aharon Yoel Sorscher • Rav Yissachar Wolf • Rav Boruch Miller

KITCHEN • SHABBOS • YOM TOV • BRACHOS • AVEILUS • TAHARAS HAMISHPACHA • EVERYDAY SHAILOS

ISSUE #22 – COFFEE FAQs

Commonly Received Questions and their Answers

Below are some common questions and answers based on psakim from the rabbonim of the Bais Horaah. Please note: in the event one believes they have heard a different opinion in the past, one's family posek should always be consulted. Mareh mekomos for any specific answers below are available by email request to ask@bhdetroit.org.

• May one drink coffee before Shacharis?

- Even though one may not eat or drink anything other than water before davening shacharis, coffee is permitted before shacharis because it generally helps to improve one's davening. Nowadays milk and sugar may be added as well. One should avoid drinking this coffee in a social group which may lead to missing davening.
- One should not continue drinking the coffee during davening out of respect for the tefillah.

• I started drinking coffee in the morning. When does the bracha expire?

- The bracha can be effective for the entire day with following conditions:
- Your intention while making the bracha was to drink throughout the day.
- You remain in the same room throughout the day (or in the same building, provided it is typical to roam between rooms of the particular building).
- If you know there will be at least a 30-minute break in drinking (e.g. going into a meeting, or finishing a cup), and you at some point drank 3 ounces within 15 seconds, you should recite a bracha achrona and then make a new shehakol when again ready to drink.

• Does one make a borei nefashos after sipping coffee?

- If one drank 3 ounces within 15 seconds, a borei nefashos is recited. Note: a bracha rishona of shehakol is made on any amount.

• I left my house to grab something from the car. Do I make a new shehakol upon returning?

- If the car is parked in a connected garage, a new bracha is not required. However, if you left the house entirely, the bracha of shehakol expires even if you were only gone momentarily. If there was another person sitting and drinking with you (e.g. a coffee date) who remained in the house, you would not lose the bracha so long as they are still present upon your return. See below for other exceptions.

• Does this halacha change if I am eating a pastry along with my coffee?

- According to many poskim, if a kezayis (1 fl. ounce) of pastry was eaten within four minutes at any point prior to your leaving the house, this effectively saves the shehakol, and a new bracha on the coffee is not required upon return.

• If I began drinking at home and then left to work, do I make a new shehakol?

- If you were already on your way out when the bracha was made, you may continue drinking while you are travelling without making a new bracha. Even upon arrival at your destination, a new bracha is not required.

• While running multiple errands, is a new bracha required after each stop?

- No. If the original bracha was made while enroute and with this intention, a new bracha is not required for as long as you remain out-and-about.

• Can coffee be used for Havdalah?

- Since coffee is a very popular beverage, and is commonly served to important guests for non-thirst reasons, it has the status of chamar medina. If wine or grape juice is not available, coffee may be used. A shehakol is made instead of hagofen. Keep in mind that the temperature of the coffee should be comfortable enough that you will be able to drink 1.6 oz immediately.

• May a coffeemaker be set on a timer before Shabbos to make coffee on Shabbos?

- This should not be done due to several halachic considerations.

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● **May instant coffee be made on Shabbos?**

- Instant coffee can be made on Shabbos because the coffee granules have already been cooked prior to being freeze-dried. It is proper to pour water from the urn into a cup, and then from that cup into another cup, before then adding the coffee granules to the water. Coffee packets that have a small percentage of actual coffee grinds mixed in (e.g. Nescafe Gold) must be treated like coffee grinds, see the next question.

● **May coffee be made from grinds on Shabbos?**

- Since coffee grinds are roasted, they may be used on Shabbos in the following way: Pour water from the urn into cup #1, then pour that water into cup #2. You may then pour cup #2 directly over the coffee grinds. (This is the method known as *irui kli shlishi*.)

● **May a pour-over coffeemaker be used on Shabbos?**

- Even though this might appear similar to the issur of meraked (sifting), it is permitted to pour clear water over coffee grinds that are in a coffeemaker filter, since the water is simply gaining a taste.
- However, pouring water mixed with coffee grinds over a filter on Shabbos *is* prohibited since you are effectively filtering the grinds out of the water.

● **May a French press be used on Shabbos?**

- Using a French press coffeemaker in the normal manner is prohibited on Shabbos due to the issur of Borer. However, on Yom Tov a French press would be permitted since Borer is permitted for same day usage with items that are normally consumed on the same day.

● **May coffee beans be ground on Yom Tov?**

- Because coffee is not as fresh if the beans are ground in advance, they may be ground on Yom Tov (not Shabbos). The grinding must be done using a hand-powered grinder and with a shinui, such as letting the grinds fall directly onto a counter or table.

● **May the drip coffeemaker commonly found in hotel rooms be used (during the week)?**

- A traditional drip coffeemaker may be used since it can only be used for coffee grinds. Unflavored coffee grinds are considered kosher even without a hechsher. See below regarding other types of coffeemakers.

● **May a K-Cup machine be used in a hotel or office?**

- Since the K-Cup machines may have been used with non-kosher pods, (e.g. soups and hot cocoa) they must be kashered before usage.
- In an office setting where the machine is used constantly by non-Jews, it is impractical to kasher. However at a hotel or vacation rental property, a halachic authority should be consulted for the specific procedure.

● **May one purchase a coffee from an uncertified store (e.g. Starbucks)?**

- It is always preferable to purchase from a certified Jewish-owned establishment. If that is not an option, unflavored coffee may be purchased. Generally, items cooked by a non-Jew are forbidden even if all the ingredients are kosher. This is due to Bishul Akum, as well as concerns of non-Kosher keilim. However, unflavored coffee is essentially flavored water, which does not raise a Bishul Akum concern. Keilim are also not a concern as they are generally designated only for making coffee. In the event the keilim are washed in hot water together with non-kosher items, there are several halachic reasons to be lenient.

● **Is a bracha made upon smelling coffee beans or fresh brewed coffee?**

- If one deliberately smells coffee beans or fresh brewed coffee prior to drinking it (e.g. by bringing it near the nose), a bracha of Hanosein Reiach Tov B'peiros is made. However, once one has begun drinking, a bracha on the smell can no longer be made.

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