



THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

HALACHA SERIES ON HILCHOS SHABBOS

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Under what conditions may a pot of food be returned to the blech or hotplate?

The critical issue is one of *bishul* – cooking. The *halacha* is that any food or liquid that is not fully cooked is subject to the *issur* of cooking. By removing and returning food to the fire several prohibitions might be violated.

An example is demonstrated as follows: on Friday night, a family member removes a pot of chicken from the hotplate, which is intended for the Shabbos day meal, removes a portion and returns the pot to the hotplate. If the other portions of chicken are not fully cooked that family member has violated a biblical prohibition. [Whether the chicken returned to the hotplate may be eaten is a separate issue and it will be dealt with *be”H* at another stage].

The additional cooking of partially cooked food is a violation of a biblical prohibition. ¹ Had the partially uncooked food not been removed no problem would have occurred.

Before one may return food to a heat source one must ascertain whether the food is fully cooked.

Rule #1 – food or liquids must be fully cooked prior to being returned to a blech or hotplate.

What if I am not sure if it is fully cooked?

¹ Although several prominent *Rishonim* are of the opinion that food cooked to the degree of *ma’achal Ben Derasai* is no longer subject to the *issur d’oraisso* of *bishul*, many other *Rishonim* are of the opinion that *bishul* applies to any food not fully cooked. See *Bi’ur Halacha simon 318:4 “afilu”*.

Then it may not be returned to the heat source. ² Since it involves a biblical prohibition, the rule is *safek d’oraisso l’chumra* – a doubt involving a biblical prohibition must be stringently observed.

What is the next problem?

Food removed from a heat source tends to cool and returning it will inevitably raise the heat. In certain cases this will also involve *bishul* – cooking.

The *Shulchan Aruch* rules ³ that reheating a cold cooked liquid involves *bishul* and is prohibited. ⁴

How does one define “cold” as in the case of returning to a heat source?

It is a *machlokes* between the *Mechaber* and the *Rama*. ⁵

The *Mechaber* holds that food or liquid below the degree of *yad soledes bo* is considered cold and may not be returned. We know that *yad soledes bo* is defined as somewhere between 40°-45°C, 104°-113°F. The problem is that it is possible that this may not be taken as a leniency and

² *Bi’ur Halacha simon 318:4 “shayach”*, *SS”K 1:17* footnote 55.

³ *Simon 318:4*.

⁴ Although several *Rishonim* (*Rambam*, *Rashba* and the *Ran*) hold that one may reheat a cooked food or liquid, the *Mechaber* ruled according to the other *Rishonim* (*Rashi*, *Rabeinu Yona*, *Rosh* and *Tur*) that it is *ossur* to reheat a cold cooked liquid. Everyone agrees though that it is *ossur* to place it directly onto a heat source such as a blech or hotplate – *Bi’ur Halacha simon 318:4 “yesh bo”*.

⁵ *Simon 253:2*.

l'chumra (stringently) it must be calculated as 71°C, 160°F. ⁶

The *Rama* holds that as long as it has not cooled down it may be returned. ⁷

Rule #2 – Food or liquids must not have cooled down. According to the Mechaber it must be yad soledes bo and according to the Rama it must not have cooled down.

What is the next rule?

Even when food is fully cooked and hot it may not be placed or returned onto an open flame. ⁸ The reason is because it is *mechzi kimvasel* – it appears as if one is cooking on Shabbos. In previous shiurim we mentioned the concept of *garuf v'katum* – raking coals or sprinkling ash onto coals. The modern equivalent is a blech and hotplate, because one does not regularly cook on them. Accordingly the hotplate must be one that is used for warming and not for cooking. Both these items are considered covered heat sources and one may return pots of food onto a blech or hotplate.

Rule #3 – Food may only be returned to a blech or hotplate.

May one cover the flames on Shabbos?

One may cover the flames on Shabbos with a blech, ⁹ provided that the blech does not become red hot, as that would be *hav'arah* – making a fire.

⁶ Based on *Igros Moshe Orach Chaim* vol. IV *simon* 74, *bishul*-3.

⁷ See the *Igros Moshe Orach Chaim* IV *simon* 74, *Bishul*-3. This definition is based on the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav simon* 318:9. I heard from Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach זצ"ל that he defined it as Rav Moshe did.

⁸ *Simon* 253:2. *SS"K* 1:18-3.

⁹ *Simon* 253:3. *SS"K* 1 appendix* on *se'if* 18.

Vort on the Parsha

The *posuke* says “you must walk in the ways of *Hashem* and fear Him”. The *Midrash Tanchuma* asks what is fear (of *Hashem*) and answers, “Yosef said I fear *Hashem*” and of Iyov it says “he is a straight and G-d-fearing person”. The *K'sav Sofer* explains that poverty and wealth are two forms of trials. The trial of abject poverty is even greater for one who was wealthy and became poor. Iyov was extremely wealthy before he lost everything and yet the *posuke* attests to his steadfastness in his fear of *Hashem*. Yosef was a slave and completely downtrodden without hope of ever rising to his former status. The trial of being wealthy and powerful following extreme poverty can bring one to haughtiness and grandness. Yosef was swiftly raised to being the second most powerful person in mighty Egypt and he did not lose his *emunah* and fear of *Hashem*. The *Midrash* is indicating that true fear of *Hashem* must exist at all times and not only when waters are calmly flowing. The *K'sav Sofer* concludes that we see it in the *posuke*, which says “you must walk in the ways of *Hashem elockechu*”, where *Hashem* portrays mercy and *Elokim* justice. One must thank *Hashem* for good times and bad times and then one will be a true fearer of *Hashem*.

Food For Thought

What are the other rules for chazora?

May I ever return a pot of food to an oven?

If the fire on my stove went out, may I place the food on my neighbor's blech or hotplate?

If someone accidentally removed the wrong pot from the hotplate, may it be returned?

Answers coming be"H next week.

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If you would like to send a question to Rav Ostroff, you can write to him at shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com.

Note: The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive p'sak.