

Just One Oven? Rabbi Moshe Grebenau

Most Jewish homes only have one oven, which gives rise to an important question. What is the proper way, if there is a proper way, to use just one oven for milk and meat? This question will center around the issue of whether food can be transferred to the walls of the oven and from the walls back onto the food. We will have to examine two issues in Halacha, “*Zeah*” (steam) and “*Reicha*” (scent). The major difference between the two is that *Reicha* can only be transferred while two foods are being cooked in the same oven simultaneously, and *Zeah* is a concern even when foods are cooked one after the other. *Zeah* can work to have food particles (“blis”) sucked into the walls of the oven and then released at a later cooking into other food. Since most people don’t need to cook milk and meat simultaneously we will deal mostly with the issues of *Zeah*, we will start, however, with the issue of *Reicha*.

There are two Gemaras that deal with the Halachic significance of *Reicha*. The problem is that the Gemara in Pesachim (76b) seems to imply that *Reicha* is significant¹ and the Gemara in Avodah Zorah (66a) seems to imply that *Reicha* is not significant. Rashi² says that we should assume *Reicha* isn’t significant while Tosfos³ feels that it is significant. The Shulchan Aruch (Y.D. 108:1) takes the approach of the Rambam⁴ that one should not cook a Kosher and a non-Kosher item together on purpose, but if they did the Kosher item remains Kosher since *Reicha* is not significant B’dieved. The Rama (ibid) assumes that in certain circumstances the food will even be a problem post-facto. If we are dealing with Chometz on Pesach, if the food in question is a sharp food (Davar Charif), or if the oven does not have any ventilation⁵ the food will transfer taste to one another.

The Achronim mention two other ways that one can fix the problem of *Reicha*. If neither of the two foods is fatty at all then one can even cook them together L’chatchilah⁶. Also if the foods are being cooked in pots and not directly on the oven rack or grill, even if they are not covered, one may cook non-kosher and kosher, or milk and meat, together⁷. Some suggest that the pots must also not be directly above one another⁸.

¹ Both Gemaras have a machlokes as to whether *Reicha* is significant. The problem is that Rava (who we would Posken like over Abayee) says it’s not significant, while Rav (who we would posken like over Levi) says it is significant.

² Pesachim ibid, Rashi says that even though we’d normally hold like Rav, here we will hold like Levi since Abayee and Rava have the same machlokes and we hold like Rava over Abayee.

³ Avodah Zorah ibid, Tosfos feels that the Gemara in Avodah Zorah about scenting Yayin Nesech has no bearing on the regular machlokes of *Reicha* (mentioned in reference to cooking Nevelah and Kosher meat in one oven). Thus we really only have one sugyah that applies to ovens and we poskin like Rav.

⁴ Hil. Maachalos Asuros (15:33) and also the opinion of the Rif (Chullin 23a)

⁵ As this will make the *Reicha* more potent, see Tosfos ibid.

⁶ Shach 108:1 and Taz 108:1

⁷ Most attribute this difference to the idea of “*Hefsek Kediarah*” (Shach 108:16) and not a difference between Bishul and Tzli as the words of the Mechaber imply. However, the Magen Avrohom (O.C. 447:4)

As we mentioned earlier, if one would like to cook the foods in the same oven but at different times, the question is one of *Zeah*. *Zeah* means that there is a certain component of the food that exits the food at the time of cooking. We have to examine what the nature of this component is and what it has the power to do. Rav Shachter understands⁹ that *Zeah* only has the power to transfer taste from the food item to the oven and not vica versa. Therefore one can cook a milchik dish in the oven after cooking fleishiks (or the opposite). When the fleishiks is cooked the *Zeah* only has the power to place the taste of the food into the oven but is not able to bring the taste of the milchiks back out of the oven into the food. The Aruch HaShulchan¹⁰ has a similar psak but for very different reasons. The Ah”S understands that really *Zeah* isn’t an issue at all in our ovens and thusly one can cook milchik and fleishik directly after one another provided everything is cleaned out well in between.

The Pri Migadim¹¹ has an entirely different approach. The Pri Migadim is under the impression that *Zeah* does indeed have the ability to transfer taste from food into the walls of an oven and out of an oven into food. However, solid food does not create *Zeah* at all. Rav Moshe¹² poskins like this Pri Migadim but combines it with a Rema that one does not have to assume that there is steam unless one sees it. Rav Moshe ends off that only if the item is a solid food will we assume that no *Zeah* is present¹³. Therefore, one may cook solid foods in one oven as long as the oven is cleaned thoroughly in between different types of food. Liquid foods can not be cooked in the same oven within 24 hours of one another¹⁴ unless one (or both) of the types is always covered. According to this it is advisable to make ones oven fleishik and then cover any liquidity¹⁵ milchiks that you wish to cook in the oven. Of course, in any case one must thoroughly clean the oven in between uses to keep the issue as one of *Zeah* only.

Rav Fivel Cohen¹⁶ is of the opinion that one should cover both varieties of foods when they are being cooked in the oven (or simply have two ovens) and to wait 24 hours

understands the difference to be Tzli vs. Bishul since the *Reicha* of Bishul isn’t as strong as that of Tzli. See Badei haShulchan (108:70) for Nafka Minas.

⁸ Rabbi Forst, “*The Laws of Kashrus*” p. 223-4

⁹ Rav Shachter personally explained to me that there is a difference between Hevel and Zeiah, Hevel has the ability to be Mavlia U’Maflit while Zeiah can only be Mavlia. Hevel is produced only in small enclosed spaces such as a covered pot. This distinction is found in the Darchei Teshuvah.

¹⁰ Y.D. (92:55) says that *Zeah* is only an issue in an enclosed space (like Rav Schachter, except the Ah”S sounds like it isn’t even Mavlia) and any hot surface (i.e. the oven walls and roof) does not accept *Zeah*. Rav Moshe (note 12) rejects this assertion of the Ah”S.

¹¹ See Pitchei Teshuvah (92:6). Also see Chelkas Yaakov (2:136) and Aruch HaShulchan (92:54) who reject this premise of the Pri Migadim.

¹² Y.D. chelek alef siman 40

¹³ Rav Moshe is only willing to be Makil L’Chatchila with a Davar Yavesh and is Makil B’dieved only for a Davar Lach. Rav Sobolofsky told me that Rav Willig also holds like Rav Moshe.

¹⁴ After 24 hours all the blios in the oven would be Pogem and even if there was *Zeah* it would not asur the food. So milk and meat, even davar lach, could be cooked if one waits 24 hours in between.

¹⁵ Rav Willig is quoted as saying that Davar Lach is defined as something that is “Meareh KeMayim,” he was asked about a chicken with sauce on it and answered that if the chicken is shaken off what is left is considered a davar yavesh.

¹⁶ Badei Hashulchan (92:182)

in between. He also says that one should have two sets of grates. Rav Moshe wanted to be Makil with grates also because nothing is transferred between two metal objects (pot and the grate) unless there is liquid in between them¹⁷.

A major difference between whether one adopts the Rav Shachter's view or Rav Moshe's view is the status of the oven itself. According to Rav Schachter the oven is treif, it contains particles of both meat and milk that have been cooked in the oven. This simply does not bother us because the food does not have the power to bring out these particles to the point where they'd enter the food. According to Rav Moshe ones oven is either Parve (if you cover both foods) or Fleishik (if you cover milchiks and keep fleishiks uncovered). So if a piece of chicken fell onto the wall of the oven when the oven was hot if one had been practicing like Rav Schachter the food might be treif¹⁸ whereas according to Rav Moshe the food is definitely fine¹⁹.

¹⁷ See Rema (92:8)

¹⁸ If the oven had been used for Milchiks within 24 hours. If it had not been used for Milchiks in the last 24 hours then the Blios should all be Lifgam and B'dieved the food should still be Kosher.

¹⁹ According to the Aruch haShulchan (as we read it earlier) the food would be fine unless there had been actual splattering of the opposite type of food within 24 hours.