

Shoel U'Mashiv

Oops, We Forgot the Crockpot Rabbi Noah Whittenburg

Q - “We were going to put some already cooked meatballs into a Crockpot before *Shabbos* so they would be hot for lunch, but... we accidentally forgot to plug in the Crockpot. Is there anything we can do? Can we ask a non-Jew to plug it in?”

A - What is the problem with warming up the meatballs on *Shabbos*?

Bishul (cooking) is one of the 39 *Melachos* that a person is not allowed to do on *Shabbos*. The general rule, as quoted in the *Shulchan Aruch O.C. 318:4*, is *Ein Bishul Achar Bishul*—once something is cooked, it cannot be cooked again. This means that a cooked item can be reheated because there is no longer a concern of cooking. However, this only applies to solids. Regarding liquids, the rule is *Yesh Bishul Achar Bishul*—that it can be cooked again. The *Rema O.C. 318:15* says once a liquid has cooled down, then there is a problem of *Bishul*, but while it is still hot there is no problem, and it can be returned to the heat source.

What is the problem of asking the non-Jew?

The *Shulchan Aruch O.C. 307:2* says that anything a Jew cannot do on *Shabbos*, they are not allowed to tell a non-Jew to do. Additionally, the *Shulchan Aruch O.C. 276:1* says that one may not get direct benefit from any *Melacha* that a non-Jew did on behalf of a Jew. There are some cases where one is allowed to hint in an indirect way, but Rabbi Simcha Bunim Cohen in *The Sanctity of Shabbos* (pg. 26) says, “a hint that is not in the form of a command, but which would result in a prohibited benefit for the Jew is not a practical device since the Jew will anyway not be able to benefit from the *Melacha*.”

Can they ask a non-Jew to turn on their Crockpot?

I told them that it was a problem for both reasons explained above: first is asking a non-Jew to do a *Melacha* and second is warming up cold meatballs, which are very saucy and a problem of *Bishul*. I told them for the future that if they realized during *Bein HaShmashos* (until approximately 27 minutes after candle lighting), the *Shulchan Aruch O.C. 342:1* allows a non-Jew to do a *Melacha* that is of important need during *Bein HaShmashos*.