

THE HALACHAH SHEET

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Melechtes Bishul

Cooking

Forms of Heat

The Prohibition

- **Definition.** The *melachah of bishul* is defined as significantly changing a substance via heat. Both foods and nonfoods (e.g., wax or metal), liquids and solids, are included in the *issur*.¹
- **Temperature.** Only cooking at a temperature of *yad soledes bo* (lit. a degree of heat that causes one's hand to recoil — from 110°F)² is considered *bishul*.³
- **Degree of cooking.** The extent of cooking necessary to transgress *bishul* differs for liquids and solids:
 - **Solid food.** The halachos of cooking solids depends on what state the food is in. There are three categories:
 1. **Uncooked.** It's forbidden to cook a raw food to the point of minimum edibility ("כמאכל בן דרוסאי").⁴ Practically, this is when it's one-third cooked (i.e., it has been cooked for a third of its cooking time).⁵
 2. **Partially cooked.** Food that has already reached the level of edibility is forbidden to be cooked any further (e.g., doughy undercooked challah cannot be heated to a temperature that's *yad soledes bo*).⁶
 - **D'Rabbanan.** Chazal forbade putting any uncooked or partially cooked liquid or solid, even temporarily, on a heat source where it could potentially get cooked if it's left there long enough (even though your intention is to remove it before it reaches *yad soledes bo*). This was decreed out of concern that you'll forget to remove it and thus transgress *bishul*.⁷
 3. **Fully cooked.** Food that's fully edible can be heated up, even if by doing so the taste will improve.⁸
 - **Baked items.** A fully baked food cannot be cooked in a liquid, since doing so significantly changes the food ("יש בישול אחר אפייה").⁹
 - **Liquids.** It's forbidden to cook liquids to the temperature of *yad soledes bo* (110°F).¹⁰ It's also forbidden to heat liquid that has already reached *yad soledes bo* to a higher temperature.
- **Kiruv bishul.** *Bishul* is not only transgressed by initiating the cooking process, it also includes hastening the cooking process.¹¹ Actions that would accelerate cooking include: moving uncooked food closer to a flame, covering a pot with a lid,¹² and reducing the volume of food or liquid being heated (causing the remainder to cook more rapidly).¹³
 - **Stirring.** It's forbidden to stir semisolid foods while on a heat source because it causes the heat to be more evenly distributed, thereby hastening the cooking.¹⁴ Additionally, you may not stir or serve from a fully cooked food while it's on the heat source (e.g., cholent while it's still in the Crock-Pot base).

- **Toldos aish.** The *melachah of bishul* doesn't only apply to cooking with a direct heat source. Rather, it's also forbidden to cook in something that was heated from a fire (*toldos aish*).¹⁵ For example, you can't add uncooked spices to a pot of soup even after the pot is removed from the fire.
- **Transferring liquids.** When a hot liquid is transferred to another container, its ability to cook is reduced. If a food or liquid cools off below *yad soledes bo*, there is no *issur of bishul*. There are three levels of *keilim* which each have their own unique set of halachos:
 1. **Kli Rishon** — A *kli* in which the food was cooked.
 2. **Kli Sheini** — A *kli* that received its contents from a *kli rishon*.
 3. **Kli Shelishi** — A *kli* that received its contents from a *kli sheini*.

Kli Rishon

- **Definition.** A *kli rishon* is a vessel that was heated on a fire. After being removed from its heat source, the food or liquid inside retains its ability to cook anything that's placed in it (as long as it's still *yad soledes bo*).¹⁶
- **Restrictions.** No uncooked food, liquid, or baked item can be placed in a *kli rishon*. Additionally, a container of cold food or liquid (e.g., a baby bottle) can't be immersed in a *kli rishon*.
- **Leniencies.** The following items are permitted to be placed into a *kli rishon* that has been removed from the fire:
 1. **Fully cooked food.** A solid fully cooked food can be put into a *kli rishon* off the fire ("אין בישול אחר בישול").¹⁷ (E.g., cold cooked chicken can be put into a pot of hot soup.)
 - **Exception.** Foods that immediately dissolve when placed in a liquid (e.g., salt, sugar, instant coffee) shouldn't be put into a *kli rishon* even if they've been previously cooked.¹⁸
 2. **Warm liquids.** A cooked liquid that hasn't completely cooled down can be reheated in a *kli rishon*.¹⁹
- **Pouring.** A hot liquid being poured from a *kli rishon* retains its ability to cook a food's outer layer ("כדי קליפה").²⁰ Therefore, anything that can't be placed in a *kli rishon* can't be poured upon from a *kli rishon*. For example, you can't pour hot water directly onto coffee granules or onto cold droplets of uncooked water in a wet cup. However, hot water from a *kli rishon* can be poured onto a baby bottle to warm its contents because the hard plastic outer layer won't be cooked.²¹

Kli Sheini

- **Definition.** A *kli sheini* is a vessel that contains food or liquid that was transferred from a *kli rishon*. It's only capable of cooking foods that are easily cooked ("קלי הבישול").

1. שו"ע (שיח:סק"א) אג"מ או"ח ח"ב ס' פה 2. אג"מ או"ח ח"ד ס' עד אות ג 3. שו"ע (שיח:יד) 4. שו"ע (שיח:ד) 5. מ"ב (רנג:סק"ח) 6. שו"ע (שיח:ד) 7. שו"ע (שיח:יד) 8. שו"ע (שיח:ד) 9. שו"ע (שיח:ה) 10. מ"ב (שיח:סק"ד) 11. עיין אורחות שבת עמ' 12. שו"ע (רנד:ד) 13. שו"ע (שיח:פ"א הערה צ) 14. שו"ע (שיח:יח) שעה"צ (שם:סק"ל"ו) 15. שו"ע (שיח:ג) 16. שו"ע (שיח:ט) 17. שו"ע (שיח:טו) 18. מ"ב (שיח:סק"א) 19. רמ"א (שיח:טו) 20. מ"ב (שיח:סק"ד) 21. שו"ע (שיח:טו) 22. צב:סק"ה

- **Restrictions.** Due to halachic uncertainty of what qualifies as “easily cooked,” we’re stringent to consider almost everything easily cooked. Therefore, practically, anything that can’t be put into a *kli rishon* also can’t be put into a *kli sheini*.²²
- **Leniencies** The following items are permitted to be placed into a *kli sheini* that has been removed from the fire:
 1. **Items not easily cooked.** There are three items that definitely qualify as not easily cooked and therefore can be placed in a *kli sheini*. They are: **a)** water, **b)** oil, **c)** spices (in raw, unpowdered form).²³
 - **Scalding hot.** Some poskim are stringent to even forbid placing not-easily-cooked items in a *kli sheini* that’s hot to a degree that would burn your hand (“יד נכזית בו”). This temperature isn’t clearly defined, and therefore some avoid the concern by transferring the liquid to a *kli shelishi* before adding even water, oil, or spices.²⁴
 2. **Cooked cooled liquids.** Liquids that have been cooked and cooled off may be put into a *kli sheini*.²⁵ Therefore, it’s permitted to add precooked tea essence or milk (pasteurized is considered cooked) to a hot *kli sheini*.²⁶
 3. **Cooked soluble foods.** Foods that easily dissolve (e.g., salt, sugar, instant coffee) can be placed into a hot *kli sheini*.²⁷ (Flavored instant coffee sometimes has additives that are uncooked, which would be forbidden to add to a *kli sheini*.)
- **Pouring.** Pouring from a *kli sheini* isn’t subject to the restrictions of *kli sheini*. Rather, it follows the more lenient halachos of *kli shelishi*.²⁸

Kli Shelishi

- **Definition.** A *kli shelishi* is a vessel that contains food or liquid that was transferred from a *kli sheini*. All foods and liquids (with the exception of foods that are easily cooked; see “Restrictions” below) are permitted to be placed in a *kli shelishi*.²⁹ *Keilim* that receive contents from a *kli shelishi* and onward are halachically equivalent to a *kli shelishi*.
- **Restrictions.** Only foods that are known to be easily cooked are forbidden to be put into a *kli shelishi*. Examples of foods in this category are: eggs,³⁰ sardines, or salted fish.³¹
 - **Tea.** It’s a *machlokes* whether to consider tea “easily cooked” to permit it being placed in a *kli shelishi*. The ideal method to satisfy all opinions would be to prepare tea essence (tea concentrate) before Shabbos and put it into a *kli sheini* on Shabbos.³² (Alternatively, one can prepare tea essence on Shabbos by soaking the tea bags in cold water for some time.)

Mixed Status

- **Machlokes.** There are two notable cases of items whose classification is debated: a ladle, and a hot solid food (“דבר גוש”). In practice, we are stringent to consider them like a *kli rishon* only regarding uncooked foods.
- **Ladle.** Some opinions classify a ladle as a *kli rishon* (making the bowl it pours into a *kli sheini*), and others consider it a *kli sheini* (making the bowl it pours into a *kli shelishi*).
 - **Practically.** We’re stringent to consider a ladle a *kli rishon* only regarding uncooked items, and we’re lenient to consider it a *kli sheini* regarding baked items.

Therefore, you can dip challah into, or add baked croutons to, a bowl of soup (*kli shelishi*) that was served with a ladle (*kli sheini*).³³

- **Hot solid food.** Some opinions hold that a hot solid food retains its *kli rishon* status even once it’s transferred to another *kli*.³⁴ Others assume that it follows the same rules as a liquid and gets progressively more lenient when it’s transferred to a new *kli*.³⁵
 - **Practically.** Regarding uncooked foods, a hot solid is considered a *kli rishon*. However, regarding cooked spices and cooked liquids that cooled off, the hot solid is treated like a *kli sheini* once transferred.³⁶ Therefore, a hot piece of chicken can’t be seasoned with black pepper (uncooked), but you can put salt (cooked) or ketchup (cooked, cooled liquid) on it.

Reheating

- **Solids.** Fully cooked, roasted, or baked foods can be reheated in the same way in which they were originally prepared.³⁷ Therefore, you can recook a cooked item or re-bake a baked item. However, you cannot warm up a food using a different method than it was originally prepared with. Therefore, you can’t add croutons (baked) to hot soup that is in a *kli rishon* or *sheini*.³⁸
 - **Congeaed.** Foods that start off solid but have parts that become liquid as they’re heated (e.g., a slice of cold meat with some congealed fat), are considered solid and therefore permitted to be heated.³⁹
- **Liquids.** Liquids are considered “cooked” only as long as they’re still warm. Therefore, you cannot heat a liquid that has cooled off even if it previously reached *yad soledes bo*.⁴⁰ For example, you cannot heat meat that’s submerged in gravy or sauce. Additionally, a ladle that has excess liquid on it that cooled off should be dried before being reinserted into a *kli rishon* to prevent re-cooking the cooled droplets on it.
- **Placement.** It’s forbidden *mi’d’Rabbanan* to warm any food on Shabbos directly on a heat source, as that would resemble cooking.⁴¹ This *issur* applies even to a fire covered with a *blech*, and according to most *poskim* to a hot plate as well.
 - **Solution.** Warming foods on top of something that’s on top of the heat source would remove the concern of appearing like cooking. Therefore, it’s permitted to warm fully cooked foods on top of another food that was placed on the heat source before Shabbos, or on top of a Crock-Pot or an urn. Similarly, you can set a pot or oven tray upside down on a hot plate and put food on top of that.⁴²

22. מ"ב (שיח:סקמ"ב) 23. עיין שעה"צ (שיח:סקס"ח) אורחות שבת עמ' כח 24. מ"ב (שיח:סקמ"ח) 25. מ"ב (שיח:סקל"ט) 26. שו"ת מנחת יצחק ח"ה ס' קכז 27. מ"ב (שיח:סקע"א) 28. פמ"ג א"א (שיח:סק"לה) 29. אג"מ או"ח ח"ד ס' עד ס"ק טו 30. ש"ש"כ פ"א צ"ן קמ"א 31. שו"ע (שיח:ד) 32. הל' שבת במטבח עמ' 40 33. אורחות שבת עמ' מג 34. מ"ב (שיח:סקס"ה) 35. עיין ש"ר יו"ד (קה:סק"ח) 36. אג"מ או"ח ח"ד ס' עד סק"ה 37. שו"ע (שיח:טו) 38. שו"ע (שיח:ה) 39. מ"ב (שיח:סק"ק) 40. רמ"א (שיח:טו) 41. מ"ב (שיח:סק"צ"ב) 42. שו"ע (רג"ה) עיין ל"ט מלאכות בישול הע' 205