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Kashrus at a Shabbos Affair **Part 2**

Returning Food to a Fire on *Shabbos*

At a *kiddush* many times the *cholent* etc will be taken off the fire, and served to keep it hot the non-Jew puts it back on or in the oven. Is doing this permitted?

The *Halacha*

When food is removed from the fire it may not be returned unless there are five conditions which are met.¹ The *issur* applies whether the food was taken from the flame before *Shabbos* (cold chicken which was in the refrigerator), or even if it was taken off the fire on *Shabbos*.² The reason for the *issur* of *chazarah* is either it is cooking or because it looks like one is cooking.³

The Five Conditions

The five conditions in order to permit a pot to be put back on the fire once it was taken off are: 1. The flame to which the food is going to be returned is covered. 2. the food is fully cooked, 3. hot, 4. it is still in one's hand, 5. one

had in mind to return it to the flame when it was removed.⁴

Still in ones Hand

It is not necessary for the pot to be suspended in one's hand the entire time it is off the *blech*. It may be put down partially on a counter⁵ or even the ground, as long as one does not loosen his grip.⁶ Additionally, holding onto the handle is considered like holding onto the *keli*.⁷

Other Conditions not Met

The first three conditions must be met. One who had in mind to return food to the fire even if he placed it fully on the counter,⁸ or if it was in his hand without intention to return it, can be lenient if there is a need to do so.⁹

Hotplates

In order for someone to return a food to a fire it has to be covered with a *blech*. For one to use a hotplate it means that one needs to cover it

¹ Mesechtas Shabbos 36b, 38b, Shulchan Aruch 253:2. In regard to asking a non-Jew to put food on the fire refer to Biur Halacha 253 "l'huchheim," Shar Ha'tzyion 253:96, Klalim Ofeh pages 762-765.

² Thirty Nine Melochos page 616.

³ Mishnah Berurah 253:37.

⁴ Shulchan Aruch 253:2, Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchoso 1:17-1-5. Refer to Har Tzvi Tal Harim bishul 7, The Shabbos Kitchen pages 62-63.

⁵ Opinion of Harav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Shevus Yitzchok page 155, see Chut Shuni Shabbos 2:page 123.

⁶ Igros Moshe O.C. 4:74:33, Pnei Shabbos page 31.

⁷ Opinion of Harav Moshe Feinstein zt"l quoted in Divrei Chachumim page 129:368.

⁸ See Mishnah Berurah 56, Shar Ha'tzyion 50.

⁹ Biur Halacha 253 "v'daito."

with aluminum foil.¹⁰ If it is impossible to cook on a hotplate then one can place foods on there even if the other conditions are not met.¹¹ Nonetheless, since most hotplates have the ability to cook, the above would not be permitted.¹²

Warmers

One is permitted to return hot food to a warmer that has no temperature controls, even if there is no *blech*. The concept of *chazarah* applies when returning food to the flame since it looks like cooking, and when food is returned to a warmer, this is not the case since it is not capable of cooking. Some say one may even take a cold piece of *kugel* from the refrigerator and place it into the warmer on *Shabbos*.¹³

Returning Food into an Oven

Some say that it is always forbidden to return food into an oven, even if the fire is covered.¹⁴ The opinion of *Harav Moshe Feinstein zt"l* is that in order to permit returning food into an oven one needs to put in a metal insert.¹⁵ However, others say that doing so is not necessary.¹⁶

¹⁰ The *Shabbos Kitchen* page 60:footnote 5 quoting the opinions of *Harav Sheinberg Shlita*, *Horav Stern (Debritziner)* and others, see *Chut Shuni Shabbos* 2:page 133. Refer to *Oz Nedberu* 2:22, 12:56.

¹¹ *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchoso* 1:footnote 71.

¹² *Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita*.

¹³ *Thirty Nine Melochos* page 667. Refer to *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchoso* 1:25 who says not to put a cold food on a place where it can't cook.

¹⁴ Refer to *Shulchan Aruch* 253:2, *Mishnah Berurah* 253:67, *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchoso* 1:17, *Opinion of Harav Elyashiv Shlita* quoted in *Shevus Yitzchok* page 89, *Minchas Yitzchok* 3:28:1, *Opinion of Harav Schachter (OU)*, see *OU document S-40*, see *Igros Moshe O.C.* 4:74:26.

¹⁵ *O.C.* 4:74:26. See *Igros Moshe O.C.* 1:94.

¹⁶ *Opinion of Harav Aron Kotler zt"l* quoted in *Harav Eider on Hilchos Shabbos* page 354:footnote 963. Refer to *Shevet Ha'Levi* 3:48. See *Klalim Ofeh* pages 142-144, *OU document S-40*. Refer to *Aruch Ha'shulchan* 253:17.

L'maseh

Since these *halachos* are very intricate, one should not return any food to the fire on *Shabbos*.

Reheating Food on Shabbos

Many times food is left over from Friday night and put into the refrigerator. The question is if one is allowed to take dry food and place it on a hotplate on *Shabbos* morning? If one can not do this, then what is the permissible method of re-heating foods on *Shabbos*?

Cold food is allowed to be placed on top of a pot which is on the fire and has food in it. The reason for this is because it is not the normal way of cooking.¹⁷ Some say that one may even place cold food on top of an empty pot even if it is on top of a *blech*.¹⁸ However, this opinion should not be relied upon under normal circumstances.¹⁹ Fully cooked food may be placed near a flame for reheating.²⁰ In a place where it will not get *yad soledes bo* something which is cooled down may not be placed directly onto a *blech*.²¹

Placing Food on a Hotplate

Some times one may be interested in taking a dry food such as *kugel* out of the refrigerator on *Shabbos* and place it directly on a hotplate. Is this something which is permitted to be done on *Shabbos*? This is very common by a catered

¹⁷ *Shulchan Aruch* 253:5, *Mishna Berurah* 87, *Biur Halacha* "v'yezuher."

¹⁸ *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchoso* 1:38:footnote 112, *Chut Shuni* 2:page 129, *Thirty Nine Melochos* (Hebrew section) page 456. According to this opinion one would be able to take an empty pan and turn it upside down and place a dry dish on it, on top of a hotplate which is not meant to cook (*Klalim Ofeh* pagw 729).

¹⁹ *Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita*, *Opinion of Harav Elyashiv Shlita* quoted in *Orchos Shabbos* 2:66. Refer to *Da'as Chazon Ish* pages 22-23 who is of the same opinion. See *Shulchan Shlomo Shabbos* 253:footnote 28.

²⁰ *Shulchan Aruch* 318:15.

²¹ *Igros Moshe O.C.* 4:74:32.

affair if there is a lot of leftover food from the Friday night meal.

There is an opinion in the *poskim* that says since the heating elements of the hot plate are covered by metal there is no greater *blech* than that.²² However, others say that doing so is forbidden.²³ The accepted *halacha* is like the second opinion.²⁴

K'deirah Blech

Recently there was a *blech* which was made that was supposed to make the process of reheating food easier. The *blech* is a rectangular, covered, shallow, pan which is filled with water and covered on top. Some say that placing food on top of this *blech* is like placing food on top of a pot which has food in it.²⁵ However, many *Rabbinic* authorities do not approve its use for *Shabbos*.²⁶ Two reasons are given for this 1. It still looks like one is cooking. 2. The *K'deirah Blech* is used as a warmer not a cooker; therefore it is not considered a pot with food in it.²⁷

Adding Water to the *Cholent*

There is a common occurrence on Friday night where one sees the *cholent* is in danger of burning. Are there any permissible ways in which one may add water to the *cholent* on *Shabbos*?

Some say since one may come to mixing when

adding water one should remove the *cholent* from the fire and then add water from an urn, cover the pot,²⁸ and return it to the fire.²⁹ Others say one who will not mix when adding the water does not have to remove the *cholent* from the fire.³⁰ Some are of the opinion that the water from the urn should be added to the *cholent* directly from the urn.³¹ However, the *Shar Ha'tzyion*³² says one can add water into a cup and then place it into the *cholent*.³³ Preferably, one should remove the *cholent* from on top of the fire, add the water from a cup from the urn, and put it back onto the fire.

Tea and Coffee

Tea bags are an item which are easily cooked, and therefore cannot be placed into a *kli sheini* on *Shabbos*.³⁴ Therefore, it is better to only use instant tea and coffee on *Shabbos*, since one may come to make more tea essence if he runs out, one should not use tea essence on *Shabbos*

²⁸ It is proper not to cover a pot while it is on the fire (Refer to Igros Moshe O.C. 4:74:10, see Mishnah Berurah 254:23, Modanei Yom Tov 1:page 315).

²⁹ Shevus Yitzchok page 198 quoting the opinion of Harav Elyashiv Shlita. Refer to Modanei Yom Tov 1:page 215, Teshuvos V'hanugos 1:207:4, Thirty Nine Melochos (Hebrew section) footnote 315 quoting the opinion of Horav Aron Kotler zt"l.

³⁰ Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. This is the opinion of Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l as well (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchoso 1:footnote 42). However, refer to Meor Ha'Shabbos 1:page 451 who says he had regret from this *pesak*.

³¹ Opinion of Harav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Shevus Yitzchok page 204. Refer to Thirty Nine Melochos page 649. See Mesechtas Shabbos 38b, Rosh 3:2, Tur 253. Refer to Pnei Shabbos page 197, Igros Moshe O.C. 2:69, Shevet Ha'Levi 3:93. However, this should not be done too close the the urn since there can be a steam issue.

³² 253:47, see Rivevos Ephraim 1:246, 2:115:29, Rivevos V'yvolos 3:234.

³³ Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita told me the custom is to follow the opinion of the Shar Ha'tzyion.

³⁴ Mishnah Berurah 318:39, Aruch Ha'shulchan 318:28.

²² Yechaveh Da'as 2:45, Yabea Omer O.C. 6:32.

²³ Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, Yaskil Avdi 6:15. 7:28:8.

²⁴ Refer to Shulchan Aruch 253:2, Rama 253:5.

²⁵ Opinions of Harav Dovid Feinstein Shlita, Harav Hershel Shachter Shlita, and Harav Neuwirth Shlita quoted in Sappirim 8:footnotes 2-3.

²⁶ Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Thirty Nine Melochos page 623, Opinion of Harav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in ibid:bishul footnote 212, Opinion of Harav Forst Shlita as expressed in Sappirim 8:footnote 1, Klalim Ofeh pages 731-733.

²⁷ Ibid:pages 623-624 quoting the opinion of Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

at a catered affair.³⁵ Instant tea and coffee should be prepared in the following manner:

Water should be poured from a *kli rishon* into a dry cup (*kli sheini*). One may then add instant tea and coffee, sugar etc.³⁶ Some say that one should be more stringent and transfer the water into a third cup before adding the other ingredients.³⁷

In regard to coloring on *Shabbos*, some *poskim* say one should first put in the coffee or tea and then add the water.³⁸

Borer

It is very common when cleaning up a table to take off the silverware and mix them into one pile. The whole pile is washed, and then put away one piece (fork, spoon, etc) at a time. Although this should be a problem of *borer* because one is selecting and organizing, the custom is to be lenient since the silverware are each recognizable by themselves so it is not considered a mixture.³⁹ However, it is best to put them away as they are taken from the pile.

One must be careful when there is an affair that any *borer* is not done too long before the actual time of the meal.⁴⁰

Tochain

A very common question which arises by a catered affair is the cutting of vegetables, since *tochain* is one of the thirty nine *melochos* which are forbidden on *Shabbos*.⁴¹

The *Rama*⁴² is of the opinion that one may cut vegetables (even very finely) if it is done close to the meal. The *Magen Avraham*⁴³ writes that although others say this is not permitted, the custom is to be lenient. The *Mishnah Berurah*⁴⁴ is of the opinion that close to the meal one should cut the vegetable etc a bit larger, but one need not protest those who are lenient.

L'maseh, one should hold like the *Mishnah Berurah* that *tochain* is not permitted close to a meal, unless it is necessary.⁴⁵ The opinion of most *poskim* is that an hour or two before a meal is not considered close to a meal.⁴⁶ However, at a catered affair this is usually the amount of time needed in order to prepare a meal. In many cases, a caterer will serve five hundred people and in this case "close to a meal" would be 3-4 hours before a meal.⁴⁷

The *shiur* for how finely a vegetable may not be cut is not discussed in the earlier *poskim*.⁴⁸ *Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita* holds there is no set *shiur* for how finely a vegetable may not be cut; rather for each vegetable one must be careful not to cut it too thin.⁴⁹ *Harav Elyashiv Shlita*

³⁵ Refer to OU document H-34.

³⁶ Refer to *Mishnah Berurah* 318:39, *Igros Moshe* O.C. 4:74:16, Opinion of *Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l* quoted in *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchoso* 1:footnote 135, *Yechaveh Da'as* 2:44, see *Minchas Yitzchok* 1:55,

³⁷ The custom of *Harav Moshe Feinstein zt"l* quoted in *Igros Moshe* *ibid*. The custom and opinion of *Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita*, *Teshuvos V'hanhugos* 1:207:7, 219, *Shevet Ha'Levi* 8:63, custom of *Harav Elyashiv Shlita* quoted in *Meor Ha'Shabbos* 1:5:footnote 25.

³⁸ *Shar Ha'tzyion* 318:65, see *ibid*:64, *Igros Moshe* O.C. 4:74:18 (*bishul*), *Bris Olom (tzovaya)* page 80, *Klalim* pages 336-337, refer to *Betzal Hachuchma* 2:49. See *Sharei Teshuva* 318:4.

³⁹ This is the opinion of the *Stiepler zt"l* and *Harav Elyashiv Shlita* quoted in *Orchos Rabbeinu* 1:page 151:195.

⁴⁰ *Eyil Meshulash (Borer)* 8:22:page 124.

⁴¹ *Mesechtas Shabbos* 73a, *Shulchan Aruch* 321:12.

⁴² 321:12. This seems to be the opinion of the *Mishnah Berurah* in 324:15, and is the opinion of the *Igros Moshe* O.C. 7:74:2 (*tochain*).

⁴³ 321:15.

⁴⁴ 321:45.

⁴⁵ Refer to OU document S-34.

⁴⁶ *Lehoros Nossan* 7:24-26.

⁴⁷ OU document S-34 quoting the opinions of *Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita* and *Harav Schachter Shlita*.

⁴⁸ Refer to *Biur Halacha* 321 "ha'michatech."

⁴⁹ OU document S-34. *Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l* holds if one needs to bite it with his teeth then it is not considered finely cut (Opinion of *Harav Shlomo*

holds one may cut the vegetables larger than one cuts it during the week.⁵⁰

Returning Food to the Refrigerator/ Freezer

When one is finished his meal, he may return food to the refrigerator or freezer and there is no concern of preparing from *Shabbos* to weekday in this situation.⁵¹

Cleaning the Table after the Seuda

Any perishables may be placed in their proper place to avoid spoilage.⁵² The table should not be cleared of anything else, as this would constitute a preparation for the weekday on *Shabbos*, which is forbidden.⁵³ If there will be people sitting around the table until *Shabbos* is over clearing the table is permitted if the dirty plates, etc are bothersome. This is because doing so is considered a *Shabbos* need and not a weekday one.⁵⁴ If *shalosh seudas* is being held in a *shul* then cleaning the *shul* is always permitted as an honor to the *shul*.⁵⁵ One who comes to *shul* when it is still light outside (too early to *daven maariv*) should not take a *siddur* upon coming to *shul*, if he does not look inside a bit when he takes the *siddur*. The reason is because one is preparing from

Shabbos to weekday.⁵⁶ Washing a *becher* out for *havdala* before *davening maariv* is not allowed.⁵⁷

Decorating Foods

Some times for dessert a caterer would like to make a swirl on top of a dessert to make it look nice. The question is if this is considered writing which would be forbidden on *Shabbos*,⁵⁸ or is only a design and not considered writing?

The opinion of *Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita* is that doing so is permitted and it is not considered writing.⁵⁹

Cutting Cakes with Letters

Letters which are on a cake may not be cut on *Shabbos*, since doing so is erasing on *Shabbos* which is forbidden.⁶⁰

Although it would seem that if one cuts in between letters it would be permitted, it is preferable not to do this on *Shabbos* either. One of the *eitzas* if one wants to have words on a cake is for the bakery to write the words on a separate piece of chocolate and put it on the cake.⁶¹ If this was not done the non-Jew may cut the cake even if he will cut the letters.⁶²

Twist Ties

At a catered meal there is obviously a lot of garbage that has to be gotten rid of. The question is if one is allowed to tie up the garbage bags with twist ties or is doing so forbidden because of "tying" on *Shabbos*.

Zalman Aurbach zt"l quoted in *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchoso* 6:footnote 6). See *Chut Shuni Shabbos* 1:page 102 who says if it is fit to eat then it is *tochain*.

⁵⁰ *Am Mekadshei Sh'viev* 1:page 106:footnote 4.

⁵¹ *Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita*, see *Machzei Eliyahu* 61, *Nishmas Shabbos* 4:383, *Yalkut Yosef* page 222:22:footnote 26, *Menuchas Ahava* 11:17, *Teshuvos V'hanhugos* 1:227, *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchoso* 28:81, *Minchas Shlomo* 2:35:7, *Megillas Sefer* 87:6, *Rivevos Ephraim* 5:261. Refer to *Shevet Ha'kehusi* 1:126. Refer to *Rivevos V'yolvos* 3:243 who is stringent *l'chatchilah*.

⁵² Refer to *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchoso* 28:79.

⁵³ *Gemora Shabbos* 113a, 118a, *Shulchan Aruch* 302:3, 323:6.

⁵⁴ *Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita*. Refer to *Nishmas Shabbos* 4:359.

⁵⁵ *Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita*, see *Igros Moshe O.C.* 4:70:2, *Rivevos Ephraim* 3:283, *Nishmas Shabbos* 4:360.

⁵⁶ *Rivevos Ephraim* 3:283, see *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchoso* 28:74.

⁵⁷ *Rivevos Ephraim* 3:282.

⁵⁸ *Shulchan Aruch* 340:5, *Mishnah Berurah* 24.

⁵⁹ OU document S-18. One is forbidden to use whip cream which comes from a can (*Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita*).

⁶⁰ *Rama* 340:3.

⁶¹ Opinion of *Harav Schachter Shlita* quoted in OU document S-9.

⁶² *Ibid*.

The opinion of most *poskim* is that using twist ties is permitted on *Shabbos*, and not included in the *issur* of “tying,”⁶³ while others say a problem of tying exists with using twist ties.⁶⁴

Preparing For a *Motzei Shabbos* Party

If one is having a party on *Motzei Shabbos* he is not permitted to prepare chairs etc. on *Shabbos* for the party, since this would be preparing from *Shabbos* to weekday.⁶⁵

In conclusion

The *halachos* discussed here are just the tip in the iceberg of the *halachos* that are applicable especially to a catered affair on *Shabbos*. The best advice one can give is the advice given by the *Mishnah Berurah* in his introduction to *hilchos Shabbos*. “It is very easy for one to transgress an *issur* on *Shabbos*. The *eitzah* on how to avoid this from happening is to learn *hilchos Shabbos* and to review it always, in order that you should know what is permitted and what is forbidden. If not for this even if one learns all the *mussar* which instructs him to watch the *Shabbos* it will not help.”

⁶³ Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see *Divrei Yatziv* O.C. 152-153, *Divrei Chachumim* page 124:354 quoting the opinions of Harav Moshe Feinstein zt”l and Harav Sheinberg Shlita, *Shevet Ha’Levi* 8:55, *Chut Shuni Shabbos* 2:page 228, Opinion of Harav Ephraim Greenblatt Shlita as quoted in *Am Mekadshei Sh’viev* 2:page 49:footnote 37, *Rivevos V’yovlos* 2:357, 3:552:1, 6:184:2, 7:379:4, 8:502, *Emes L’Yaakov* 317:footnote 36.

⁶⁴ *Shemiras Shabbos K’hilchoso* 9:13, Opinion of Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt”l quoted in *Shemiras Shabbos K’hilchoso* 15:footnote 166, Opinion of Harav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in *Orchos Shabbos* 10:30, Some say one should not leave it tied for more than a week (*V’Yan Yosef* O.C. 150).

⁶⁵ Refer to *Rama* 667:1, *Magen Avraham* 3, *Chai Adom* 153:6, *Mishnah Berurah* 4, *Aruch Ha’shulchan* 667:2, *Machzei Eliyahu* 58:3:24:page 171. Some say one is allowed to invite guests on *Shabbos* to come to a party that will take place on *Motzei Shabbos* (*Rivevos Ephraim* 8:185:11).

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לרפואה שלמה
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Kashrus K Corner

Buying cut up fruit

Is it permissible to purchase cut up fruits - or even a half a watermelon from a store without a reliable *hashgacha*?

This is a very common question. The *halacha* is as follows: When using a knife to cut fruit, one must make sure that the knife is not used to cut other items in the store such as fish. Some time the worker may use the knife to cut food needed for his lunch. Although a lot of fruit is cut at once and anything non-*kosher* will be washed off by the cutting of the fruit, one does not know which fruit is the one which might have the non-*kosher* food on the fruit. Practically, the above concern may exist in a mom and pop store (small store). However, large supermarkets such as Pathmark or Shoprite generally have special knives for this purpose and therefore buying cut up fruit at these and large supermarkets is permitted.

Halachically Speaking

► Halachically Speaking is a bi-weekly publication compiled by Rabbi Moishe Dovid Lebovits, a former *chaver kollel* of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath and a *musmach* of Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. Rabbi Lebovits currently works as the Rabbinical Administrator for the KOF-K Kosher Supervision.

► Each issue reviews a different area of contemporary *halacha* with an emphasis on practical applications of the principles discussed. Significant time is spent ensuring the inclusion of all relevant *shittos* on each topic, as well as the *psak* of Horav Yisroel Belsky, *shlita* on current issues.

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