



PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM'S SHABBOS KITCHEN PROGRAM

Shabbos Kitchen Lesson 14

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Questions and
answers

Q: I've heard from some sources that a needle may be used on *Shabbos*, and from other sources that it may not. Which is it?

A: A needle is classified as an object that is usually used for a labor prohibited on *Shabbos* (*K'li Sh'm'lachto L'Issur*). It cannot be used to sew on *Shabbos*, because sewing is a prohibited *Shabbos* labor. However, it may be used for a permitted purpose, such as to remove a splinter or a thorn. It may be moved for itself or its space.

However, if the eye of the needle is broken, the needle becomes completely *Muktz'a*. The *M" A* 24 explains that broken needles are discarded, and are not saved for such purposes as removing thorns.

HaRav Dovid Ostroff (*P"Sh H"Sh* I:46) notes, however, that if during the week a person designates a certain needle for the purpose of removing thorns, even though that needle is broken, it is fully permitted (*K'li sh'm'lachto L'Heter*). – R' Shlomo

Q: I have also heard that there is a category of *Muktz'a* lest one will repair the object. What is that all about?

A: We discussed this briefly in Lesson Twelve. Consider the leg of an object, such as a bench, that came off on *Shabbos*. We are concerned that the person might tightly wedge the leg back into place, which is a prohibited *Shabbos* labor of *Boneh* (building).

This prohibition would not apply if the leg was loosely reinserted. However, one might inadvertently tightly wedge it back into place. Therefore, the disjointed leg becomes *Muktz'a*. A more common example would be a screw falling out of a pair of eyeglasses. Both the eyeglasses and the screw become *Muktz'a*. However, if the screw is lost, the eyeglasses do not become *Muktz'a*. There are Rabbinical authorities (*Poskim*) who advise 'losing' the screw by kicking it or moving it with a stick into a hole. Another example is a baby carriage wheel that came off. The carriage becomes *Muktz'a*. Similarly, if a broomstick becomes separated from the broom, it is *Muktz'a*, unless that particular broom was always loose. It is permitted to loosely reinsert the handle into the broom.

Your question refers to the *Talmud Shabbos* 138b, where consideration is given for this type of *Muktz'a* to have its own category. – R' Shlomo

Kneading

“*Shalom* Sarah, this is Rabbi Roth calling. I’m returning your telephone call. How may I help you?”

“Hi, Rabbi Roth,” replied Sarah. “Thanks for calling me back so quickly. A question came to me this past *Shabbos* on a topic we have not yet covered in our class on the Laws of the Sabbath (*Hilchos Shabbos*) at the synagogue. I was invited to a 3rd Meal (*Seuda Sh’lishis*) in my neighborhood, and the host wanted to make egg salad.

“I overheard one of the children in the home talking about making egg salad ‘backwards’. I didn’t know what he was talking about, but other *Shabbos* guests seemed to nod knowingly to each other as if this was a standard thing. I thought I would ask you what this was all about.”

“Ah, yes, the host was concerned about a prohibited *Shabbos* labor (*Melacha*) of kneading (*Lishab*). It is not permitted to mix flour and water¹, or similar ingredients², into a single entity.”

“Why is that a prohibited *Shabbos* labor?” Sarah asked.

Rabbi Roth responded, “After certain plants were ground into a powder, they were sifted. The powder was then mixed with water to make ‘dough’. This was a part of the process of making the dyes that were used in the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*). Therefore, it is prohibited to mix similar very small (or finely chopped) items with liquids to make soft dough³, or for that matter, to make something hard like plaster⁴.”

“Does that mean I can’t add liquid to anything solid?” Sarah inquired.

Ingredients:
blend vs. don’t
blend

“There are some mixtures that may be made on *Shabbos*. However, let me preface by noting that wherever possible, it is better to make mixtures prior to *Shabbos*,” said the Rabbi. “But, to answer your question, liquids may be added to solids and then mixed under certain circumstances. The Torah forbids mixing water into uncooked flour because that process binds the mixture into dough, which is called kneading. If the water was added to substances that don’t bind very well, such as roasted flour, coarse *Matzzo* meal, or Israeli-style (toasted) farfel, dough would not result and it would be permitted.”

¹ *Sh”A O”Ch* 321:14

² *ibid* 15,16

³ *RMB”M H”Sh* 8:16

⁴ *Rashi to Talmud Shabbos* 49b

“May I make any kind of mixture I want out of roasted flour and not be concerned about kneading?” Sarah asked.

Types of mixtures

“There are additional considerations. There are three types of mixtures to consider with regard to the product’s texture. The 1st is forbidden. The 2nd is permitted if made under certain conditions. The 3rd is completely permitted (*Muter*).

Thick mixtures

“The 1st type of mixture is thick (*B’lilah Avah*). Initially (*L’chatchila*), one should not even pour water into uncooked flour⁵, but if it happened, it is strictly prohibited to stir the mix, thereby producing dough⁶, because flour blends with the water. It is permitted, however, to pour water into a small⁷ amount of roasted flour (*farfel*) and knead it, even if the resultant mixture is thick.

“It is not permitted to pour water into a *lot* of roasted flour because the process is too easily mistaken for mixing water into a lot of uncooked flour. Restricting the thick mixture to a small amount of roasted flour at a time will serve as a reminder not to mix water and uncooked flour.

Thin mixtures

“Kneading pertains to making thick mixtures of ingredients that blend, but not thin mixtures (*B’lilah Rakab*). Therefore, from a *Torah* (*D’Oraisa*) perspective, one could make a thin mixture. However, the Rabbinical authorities (*Poskim*) were concerned that this might lead to inadvertently making a thick mixture.”

“Can you give me an example of a thick and a thin mixture?” Sarah asked.

“Bread dough is a thick mixture,” Rabbi Roth said, “as it has a very thick consistency. Generally, any mixture that can be poured like a liquid is considered a thin mixture⁸. It is easy to see how one might intend to make a loose batter and end up with thick dough. Therefore, the Rabbis invoked a well known technique, that when combined with the intent in making a thin batter, would not in turn transgress the Biblical prohibition of kneading.”

Sarah asked, “What is that technique?”

Two changes

“It is something we have discussed in class at the Synagogue that was called a ‘change’ (*Shimu*). The Rabbis require two⁹ changes when making a thin mixture: (1)

⁵ *M”B* 57, 67; *Sh”Sh K”H* 8:5. The view of Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi (*Talmud Shabbos* 18a) is that the mere act of pouring water into flour (or pouring flour into water) is *Biblically* prohibited. However, the final ruling (*B”Y*) is according to R’ Yossi bar Yehuda, that the mere act of pouring is not *Biblically* prohibited.

⁶ *Sh”A O”Ch* 321:14

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ *P”Sh H”Sh* IV:24

⁹ *ibid*; *Sh”A O”Ch* 324:3.

change the *order* of combining the ingredients, and (2) change the *method* of mixing the ingredients.

“For example, suppose you like to have a breakfast of a thin liquidy porridge. Normally, you put in the mix, then the cold milk, and then the sugar, thereby producing a thin mixture. On *Shabbos*, this thin porridge must be made in a different order. First, put in the cold milk, then put in the porridge mix, and last, put in the sugar.

“The second change is the method of mixing the thin porridge. Instead of the usual method of stirring with a spoon (or fork) in a circular fashion, either shake the bowl¹⁰, stir with your finger¹¹, stir with the handle of the spoon or fork¹², or make X’s (a crisscrossing motion¹³) with the spoon¹⁴.

“There are some limitations to these techniques. Although you may stir with your finger, it is not permitted to do so while wearing a kitchen glove¹⁵, as that is considered a typical way of mixing food. Some Rabbinical authorities go further than requiring a crisscrossing motion with a spoon, and require you to lift the spoon out of the bowl after each diagonal of the X is made¹⁶.

Dissolved mixtures

“The 3rd type of mixture, the category that is permitted to be made in the usual fashion, is a mixture of liquid with ingredients that dissolve. Therefore, it is permitted to put instant chocolate powder, instant coffee, instant tea, soup mix powder, or sugar into cold¹⁷ liquids. The only concern regarding the prohibited *Shabbos* labor (*Melacha*) of kneading (*Lishah*) is putting a small amount of water into the powder, making a paste, before putting in the remaining water. That, indeed, is kneading, and is avoided by putting a lot of water into the powder at once¹⁸.”

“OK, Rabbi Roth”, said Sarah, “let me review with you. We are not permitted to make dough out of ingredients that blend, such as mixing water and flour, which is called kneading. There are three types of mixtures that pertain to ingredients that don’t blend so well or don’t blend at all. We are not permitted to make a *large* amount of a thick mixture of liquid with roasted flour. We are permitted to make a *small* amount of a thick mixture of liquid with roasted flour. A thin mixture may be made if we invoke

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ *RM”A to Sb”A O”Cb* 321:14, *M”B* 62, 63

¹² *I”MIV*:74:6

¹³ *Sb”A O”Cb* 324:3

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ *CH”T* 58::8

¹⁶ *ibid* 58:6

¹⁷ Note that these items may not be placed in a 1st Vessel (*K’li Rishon*) on the fire. The preferred method is to put them into a 3rd Vessel (*K’li Sh’lishi*), and hot water from a 2nd Vessel (*K’li Shaini*) can then be poured onto them.

¹⁸ *CH”T* 58:8

changes in the order of combining the ingredients and change the method of mixing. Powders that dissolve are permitted.”

Liquids

“That is an excellent summary!” said Rabbi Roth. “Now, there is more to consider, because until now, we have restricted the conversation to using water. Other liquids serve the same purpose as water, such as fruit juice, milk, and oil¹⁹. Simply pouring them onto solid substances starts the bonding process. As I mentioned, initially²⁰, we consider that to be separate from the mixing part of the process which is Biblically forbidden.

There are other ‘bonding agents’, such as mayonnaise²¹, that must not be used in mixing very small or fine solids. However, it is permitted to mix mayonnaise with cubed potatoes or with chunks of tuna without concern²². The problem of kneading only occurs with mayonnaise by stirring the mixture²³ with fine particles.

Solids

“I would also like to give you additional examples of the substances that combine with liquid to make a thick mixture. They are bread crumbs; cereals such as thick baby cereal, bran, farina, and oatmeal. Substances that combine with liquid to make a loose mixture are fruit puree (such as applesauce), ketchup, and thin baby cereal.”

Sarah thought for a moment and then asked, “What is the status of instant mashed potatoes? I’m assuming they are placed into a 3rd vessel (*K’li Sh’lishi*) and water from a 2nd Vessel (*K’li Shaini*) will be used to make them, to avoid issues of cooking (*Bishul*) on *Shabbos*. Is that permitted if I make a small amount, and/or invoke the changes in order and method of mixing it?”

“No, it is not,” answered the Rabbi. “The water serves to bind the potato flakes together into a thick mixture²⁴, and it is classified as uncooked flour. Therefore, it is not permitted to make instant mashed potatoes at all.

Size

“However, another consideration in the laws of kneading (*Lishah*) is the size of the food ingredient. If it is large, it cannot be kneaded. That is why I said it is permitted to put mayonnaise into a bowl with cubed potatoes or chunky tuna and stir without concern. Bonding doesn’t happen automatically by pouring in mayonnaise, and the potatoes or chunky tuna don’t lose their identity in the mixture. However, that would not be the case with potato flakes.

¹⁹ *Sb”A* HR 321:15

²⁰ See footnote 5 above, where the final ruling is the act of pouring is not Biblically forbidden.

²¹ *Sb”A O”Ch* 321:16, *M”B* 66, *P”M* IV:74

²² Rabbi Dovid Ribiat (2001), “The 39 *Melochos* of *Shabbos*”, II: p. 543 and footnote 87a.

²³ *P”M* 321:12

²⁴ *Sb”Sb K”H* 8:25 in the name of the *Ch”I*.

Adding to a
mixture

“There is another area where kneading (*Lisbah*) applies, and that is adding to an existing mixture. Suppose, for example, you have a mixture of oatmeal cereal that was prepared before *Shabbos*. By the time you want to eat it on *Shabbos*, you decide that it looks a little loose, so you are thinking about the possibility of adding more oatmeal mix to the mixture. Is there ‘mixing after mixing’? Yes! Thus, it is not permitted to thicken the mixture by adding more oatmeal mix to the mixture²⁵.”

“What if I want to slightly thicken a thin mixture?” asked Sarah.

“Let’s assume you have a *very* thin mixture. (Otherwise, adding even a little more solid to it would make it into a thick mixture.) It can be slightly thickened by invoking the two changes I discussed earlier, which are reversing the order of mixing the ingredients and mix them together with a change in method. Consider an example of *very* thin baby cereal. (1) Place some dry cereal mix into the bowl and pour the thin mixture of cereal batter into it. (2) Stir the cereal in the crisscross manner.”

“Rabbi Roth, what if the opposite occurs? Suppose I have a mixture, thick or thin, and I decide that I want to add water to it, and stir it. Will adding water improve the mixture?” Sarah asked.

“No. Remember, kneading (*Lisbah*) is the process of binding small solids into dough with liquid. You are doing the reverse: you want to add water to a mixture to weaken the bond. That is not called kneading (*Lisbah*), and you may do so without concern²⁶. Of course, this presumes that all of the solids in the mixture are fully mixed.”

“And stirring it...,” asked Sarah.

“And you may stir it with no concern²⁷,” answered Rabbi Roth. “And regarding another permutation of mixing that you might ask about, it is also permitted to combine two thin mixtures together or two thick mixtures together, without invoking any changes in methodology in mixing²⁸.”

Egg salad

“This brings us to your question about egg salad. You heard someone mention that egg salad should be prepared ‘backwards’. If the egg salad is being made with finely chopped eggs, a mixture will result. The same problem would occur with finely mashed tuna²⁹ or potatoes.

²⁵ Rabbi Simcha Bunim Cohen (1991), *The Shabbos Kitchen*. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, p. 158.

²⁶ *Ch"l* 48:7

²⁷ *ibid*

²⁸ Rabbi Simcha Bunim Cohen (1991), p. 160-161.

²⁹ *Sb"l A O"Ch* 321:16, *M"b* 66

“Therefore it is best to make the egg salad with mayonnaise prior to *Shabbos*. If the egg salad is being made on *Shabbos*, it could be done without any restrictions by leaving the eggs in large chunks. However, if one prefers the taste of freshly made egg salad made from finely chopped eggs, it must be made ‘backwards’, meaning the order of putting the ingredients into the mixing bowl is reversed. Also, the mixture should be stirred with crisscross strokes, or with your finger.”

“Thank you very much, Rabbi Roth, for answering all my questions.”

“You are welcome, Sarah. I will see you in class next week!”

Reference Abbreviations

B"Y – Bais Yosef

Ch"l – Chazon Ish

D"R – Debreciner Rav, Rabbi Moshe Stern

I"m O"Ch – Igros Moshe Orach Chaim

M"A – Mogain Avraham

M"B – Mishnah Brurah

P"M – P'ri Megadim

P"Sh H"Sh – Pirchei Shoshanim Hilchos Shabbos, HaRav Dovid Ostroff

RM"A – R' Moshe Isserlis

Sh"A O"Ch – Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim

Sh"A H'R – Shulchan Aruch HaRav

Sh"Sh K"H – Sh'miras Shabbos K'Hilchasa

Review Questions

1. What is the prohibited *Shabbos* labor that precludes adding water to flour?
2. What category of food may be mixed with liquid on *Shabbos*?
3. List the three types of mixtures.
4. What is the method required to make a thick mixture consisting of roasted flour and apple juice on *Shabbos*?
5. What is the method required to make a thin mixture consisting of baby cereal and milk on *Shabbos*?
6. What is the method required to make instant tea?
7. How should *ch'rain* (a mixture of horseradish, beets, vinegar, & sometimes mayonnaise) be prepared on *Shabbos*, assuming that the horseradish and beets were ground before *Shabbos*?
8. When Reuben opened the peanut butter container on *Shabbos*, he saw there was oil from the peanut butter that became separated and had risen to the top. Would he be permitted to mix it back into the peanut butter?
9. Is it permitted to make a peanut butter and jelly (jam) sandwich on *Shabbos* by mixing the two ingredients together first and then spreading it on the bread?
10. Is it permitted to make pudding on *Shabbos*?
11. Who should you ask regarding matters relating to your *Shabbos* kitchen?

Review Answers

1. *Lishah*, or kneading.
2. Foods that don't blend.
3. (1) thick, (2) thin, (3) liquid
4. Make only a little bit at a time.
5. Reverse the order of placing the ingredients into the mixing bowl. Make sure to add sufficient milk to avoid initially making a paste. Use a crisscross motion with a spoon to stir the mixture.
6. There are no restrictions, with the exception to initially add sufficient water to the tea mix to avoid making a paste.
7. Put horseradish in first, then beets, and finally sufficient vinegar (and mayonnaise) to make the mixture liquidy into the mixing bowl or jar. (If this is the usual order of

- making it on weekdays, do the reverse³⁰.) Mix with a crisscross pattern with a spoon or stir with your finger in the bowl; or close the lid and shake the jar.
8. Yes³¹. Because there is still oil in the peanut butter, mixing in the oil that lies on top of the peanut butter is adding liquid to a mixture, which is the opposite of kneading.
 9. No³². It is binding two substances into a thick substance.
 10. No³³, even if cold water is used.
 11. For practical applications of *Halacha*, you should always contact your local Orthodox Rabbi.

Hebrew, Yiddish, and Aramaic Glossary

Bishul – cooking

B'ilah Avah – thick mixture

B'ilah Raka – thin mixture

Boneh – prohibited *Shabbos* labor of building

ch'rain – horseradish

D'Oraisa – Pertaining to a Biblical Commandment

farfel – toasted/roasted flour

Hilchos Shabbos – laws of *Shabbos*

L'chatchila – initially; at the outset; the action may be performed without reservation

Lishab - kneading

K'li Rishon – vessel (e.g., pot, kettle) that is on the blech

K'li Shaini – vessel that contains food or liquid poured from a *K'li Rishon* (e.g., cup #1)

K'li Sh'lishi – vessel that contains food or liquid poured from a *K'li Sh'lishi* (e.g., cup #2)

K'li Sh'lachto L'Heter – object used for a permitted purpose

K'li Sh'm'lachto L'Issur – object ordinarily used for prohibited *Shabbos* labor

Matzah – unleavened bread

Melacha – one of the 39 labors necessary to build the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) and is thus forbidden on *Shabbos*. (Plural: *Melachos*)

Mishkan – Tabernacle

Muktza – objects that may not be moved on *Shabbos*; un-movables

Poskim – Rabbinical authorities

Senda Sh'lishis – Third meal, held *Shabbos* afternoon between the afternoon service and the evening service.

Shabbos – about 18 minutes before sunset Friday to about 1 hour after sunset Saturday

Shalom – Greetings! Peace! Salutations!

Shinui – change

³⁰ *RM"A* to *Sb"O O"Ch* 321:15, *P"Sh H"Sh* IV: 24:17

³¹ *Sb"Sh KH* 8:7

³² *ibid*, 13, footnote 24

³³ *D"R* 26