



PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM'S SHABBOS KITCHEN PROGRAM

Shabbos Kitchen Lesson 1

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 LESSON 1

Sh'hiya, Chazara, & Hatmana

At the sound of the ring, he lifted the telephone and said, “B. H. Fine.”

“Bert?” was the reply in the receiver.

“Speaking”, said Bert. “How can I help you?”

It was the Rabbi calling to make an appointment to help Mr. and Mrs. Fine with their kitchen. They had met the Rabbi at their cousin’s Bar Mitzvah – a cousin from the religious side of the family. Perhaps their initial motivation in making a kosher kitchen was based on health or nutrition, and maybe the food did taste a little better, but by now the Fines liked it because it was Jewish. Bert grinned to himself as he recalled that his secretary occasionally took to calling him “Moses”. Of course he wasn’t Moses, but he liked the feeling of being connected with his ancestry.

“Rabbi, we already ‘kosher-ized’ the kitchen, and you know how careful we’ve been in getting our food with the *Kosher* labels on them. You mean there’s more?” Bert liked Rabbi Roth, who was a thoughtful and patient man. The Rabbi frequently exhibited a large measure of exuberance, especially when it came to helping people discover their Jewish roots.

“Oh yes,” replied the Rabbi. “Your kitchen is perfect as long you only use it Sunday through Friday. However, I suspect you and Mrs. Fine like eating on Saturday as well. If so, you will certainly want to make sure to use the kitchen properly on *Shabbos*, or ‘*Shabbat*’ as people say in modern Hebrew. I’ve found that it is easier to learn about the *Shabbos* kitchen in your home instead of in my classes at the synagogue, so that is why I’m calling.”

Later that week, Rabbi Roth sat at the kitchen table in the Fines’ residence, and commenced the discussion with a question: “Do you have any questions about making your kitchen appropriate for *Shabbos*?” he asked.

“Yes, Rabbi,” said Mrs. Fine. “I understand that the Scriptures include a verse that says not to kindle a flame on *Shabbos*. That sounds like we should only be eating cold foods, which I should tell you really won’t do much for my husband’s appetite.”

“Mrs. Fine, your husband’s appetite sounds very similar to mine! Our Rabbis and Sages said that an important aspect of Sabbath observance is to take delight in the *Shabbos*. We call that *Oneg Shabbos*. For folks such as your husband and me, one way we take delight in the Sabbath is by sitting down to a nice hot meal, not a cold meal.”

“Rabbi,” interjected Bert hopefully, “are you saying that *Oneg Shabbos* trumps the Biblical law and we can cook on Saturday?”

“Not at all, Bert,” responded Rabbi Roth. “What I am saying is that our Sages encouraged us to learn about the permissible ways to serve hot food on *Shabbos*. We can’t cook food on *Shabbos*, but there are three ways that we can provide hot meals:

Three Ways To Serve Hot Food On *Shabbos*

1. *Sh’hija* – letting food in a pot stay on the stove top Friday into *Shabbos*
2. *Chazara* – returning food that is in a pot to the stove top on *Shabbos* by covering the stove top with a metal sheet (*blech*)
3. *Hatmana* – wrapping food or a container of food on Friday with certain types of coverings

**To Let
Remain or Stay**

“Today, I want to discuss the three methods with you. And, that means, Bert, that by this *Shabbos* you will have hot kosher food according to the laws of *Shabbos*. The first method is called *Sh’hija*.

Mrs. Fine took out a notebook from a kitchen drawer. “I’m going to take notes,” she said. “What does ‘*Sh’hija*’ mean?”

“*Sh’hija* means ‘putting’...”

“Chocolate pudding?” Bert asked hopefully.

“Bert, you are so silly!” laughed Mrs. Fine.

“No, Bert, I said ‘putting’ – to lay the pot of food down. *Sh’hija* means putting a pot of food on the stove top Friday afternoon, and letting it remain there into

Shabbos. In order to do this, however, the food has to be cooked before *Shabbos* begins.”

Mrs. Fine asked, “What if it’s not quite ready?”

“An excellent question,” answered the Rabbi. “It is best to be fully cooked, but as long as it is at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cooked¹, the food is considered cooked and may remain on the stove top. This fraction was determined based on a famous bandit named ben Derosai, who lived in *Talmudical* times. He was constantly on the run, only pausing long enough to cook food to make it edible, which was after it was $\frac{1}{2}$ cooked.

“However, you do bring up an important issue, Mrs. Fine, which is judging if the food is at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cooked. The Rabbis devised a way to minimize this problem by use of a special covering for the stove top called a *blech*.”

“More Hebrew words, Rabbi?” Bert smiled.

“Actually, it’s Yiddish, Bert. In ‘days of yore’, people would cook over a fire. The Rabbis were concerned that one might stoke the coals of the fire once *Shabbos* started.”

“To make it hotter and make the food ready on time, probably,” said Mrs. Fine.

“Yes, that is correct. The Rabbis wanted to prevent that, because as you said, Mrs. Fine, we can’t kindle a flame on *Shabbos*, which is what would happen by stoking the coals. And, in turn, this would cause further cooking of the food, which is also forbidden. One way to prevent that from happening, obviously, is to remove the coals from the fire on Friday afternoon. Another way would be to let ashes remain on the coals, or deliberately rake some ash on the coals.”

“How does putting ash on the coals help?” inquired Mrs. Fine.

“It is a visible demonstration that you aren’t particular about the temperature and quality of the fire from the coals, and it is a reminder not to stoke them once *Shabbos* begins. Today, we usually cook with gas or electric stoves, and there is no ash. So, we take a piece of sturdy metal as a covering and place it over the stove top. That piece of metal is called a *blech*.”

“Where do I get this metal sheet (*blech*)?” asked Bert. “Do I have to call down to the hardware store?”

¹ According to some Rabbinical authorities, this amount is $\frac{1}{3}$.

“You could do that,” replied the Rabbi. “It could be made of stainless steel, thick aluminum, or any other type of material that won’t turn red hot as the temperature increases on the stove top. You could also call the local Judaica store, or even the kosher food stores. Many of them carry *blechs*.

“Now,” continued the Rabbi, “the good part about the metal sheet (*blech*) is that you can let food that is only slightly cooked remain on the stove top Friday afternoon. You might see it Friday evening, after *Shabbos* has started, and think to yourself that you might adjust the temperature, but when you see the metal sheet (*blech*), it will remind you not to adjust the dial. In addition, it is advisable to put some tape or other covering over the stove dials. My *blech* is large enough that it also hides the dials.”

“Rabbi,” asked Bert, “knowing me, what if I forgot to put the metal sheet (*blech*) on the stove top before *Shabbos*? May I do so after *Shabbos* has already started?”

“Yes, you may, Bert, if the *blech* has been used before. Or, if you don’t have a *blech*, take a used, clean pot or pan and put it upside down over the stove top. In fact, if for some reason you did put the regular *blech* on the stove top and it somehow fell off on *Shabbos*, you can put it back on.”

“Rabbi,” said Bert with a chuckle, “I’ve got to ask why not just put a note next to the stove that says, ‘DON’T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT’ – wouldn’t that be a good enough reminder?”

“That is a very good question,” replied the Rabbi, “but our Sages were not satisfied with such a prompt. They wanted a stronger reminder, a reminder that was implanted into the actual cooking process. That means we must do something to the flame or the heating element, and that is why we covered the coals with ash, or today cover the stove top with a *blech*.”

**To Return
to the Metal
Sheet (*Blech*)**

“There is also a way to keep food already on the metal sheet (*blech*) that is on the stove top hot, even after the pot has been temporarily taken off the *blech* to serve some of it. This is called ‘return’ (*Chazura*). It is a good thing you are taking notes, Mrs. Fine, because there are five conditions to meet in order to return a pot of food to the stove.”

“I’ll write them down,” answered Mrs. Fine glancing at her husband. “This is the note we will keep near the stove to help us remember the procedure.”

Rabbi Roth said, “Here are the five conditions:”

Five Conditions Permitting Returning A Pot To The Stove Top

1. there must be a *blech* on the stove top
2. the food in the pot must be fully cooked
3. the pot must be returned to the *blech* while its contents are still warm
4. hold the pot handle while it is off the *blech*, and
5. have intent (*Kavanah*) to return the pot to the *blech* before taking it off the stove top

“Oy vey! What if I forget some of these details,” asked Bert. “Does that mean the pot must stay off the *blech* on the stove top and it is cold cuts for later in the day?”

“Not necessarily,” replied Rabbi Roth. “In Jewish Law (*Halacha*), there is a concept called *B'dieved*, which in the vernacular means ‘after the fact’ or the ‘fall back position’. Let’s talk stew (*cholent*), Bert. If you picked up the stew pot to take some out, and inadvertently set it down, but had the intention to return it to the *blech* on the stove top, you may still return it. And, if you didn’t have the intention to return it when you took it off the *blech*, but it is still in your hand, you may also return it. But, it is best to try and conform to all five conditions if you want to serve the remaining *cholent* later in the day.

“Mrs. Fine, you seem puzzled. Do you have a question?” asked the Rabbi.

“Yes, I do have a question – so this means I cannot take something already cooked, such as a piece of potato *kugel* (casserole or pudding), and put it on top of the *blech*? Because it is already cooked, it can’t be cooked again, yet you seem to suggest that I can’t put it on the *blech*.”

“First, we will learn later that the notion something that has already been cooked cannot be cooked again is limited in application, although it would apply to the *kugel* in your example, Mrs. Fine. Second, your conclusion about the *kugel* is correct. *Chazara* means to ‘return’ something to the *blech* on the stove top, but not to put something new onto the *blech*. Putting something new on the *blech* is *Sh’hija*, as we’ve already learned, and that must be done prior to *Shabbos* starting. However, if the *kugel* was placed on a corner of the *blech* that is so far away from the heat that is only warm, and not to the point where it can reach a temperature that is so hot the hand would recoil from it (*Yad Soledes Bo*), it may be eaten.”

“Rabbi Roth, is there any way to warm up a *kugel* from the refrigerator?” asked Bert.

“Yes, suppose there is a pot of food already on the *blech*. You can put the *kugel* on top of the pot that is on top of the *blech*, because there is only sufficient heat to slightly warm it.”

“Put the *kugel* on the top of the pot that is on top of the *blech* – it sounds like a nursery rhyme about someone who swallowed a spider.”

“Bert!” said Mrs. Fine, “we already learned in the Kosher Kitchen² project that spiders aren’t kosher!”

“OK, then it sounds like the dog that bit the cat that ate the goat ...”

“Put the *kugel* on top of the pot that is on top of the *blech* – maybe we should let Bert memorize this anyway he can!” laughed Rabbi Roth.

“And before you ask, Bert, let me add that there are reasons why it has become a Jewish Custom (*Minhag*) not to do *Chazara* with ovens that are turned on, meaning we don’t return food to an oven that is operating. We use the five conditions to return a pot of food to the *blech* on the stove top, but not to the inside of an oven that is turned on.”

**To Completely
Wrap**

“There is a third method of providing hot food for *Shabbos*,” continued Rabbi Roth. “It is possible to wrap food to retain the heat before *Shabbos*. This is called *Hatmana*. There are two important rules here: (1) food may be completely wrapped before *Shabbos* with a substance that has no intrinsic heat, such as a towel or a cloth, and (2) food may not be completely wrapped at all once *Shabbos* has started.

“Let’s ‘cover’ the first situation, where it is prior to *Shabbos*. It is not permitted to take a warming blanket that is plugged into the electricity and is on, and completely wrap a pot of food with it prior to *Shabbos* to keep the contents warm.”

“Would it be possible to drape an ordinary cloth completely over a pot and put it on an electric warming tray that is turned on?” asked Bert.

“No. It might not seem to be the same as the first example, but what you are suggesting also is not permitted, even though by itself the cloth has no intrinsic heat. The reason is because the cloth combines with the heat provided from the warming tray and is considered to add heat. That means the food will be cooked by your actions.

“The second situation pertains to after *Shabbos* has started,” the Rabbi continued. In this case, it is not permissible to completely wrap food even with a towel

² <http://www.pirchei.com/>

or a cloth. This is a very strict law, and if one does it intentionally (*B'mazid*) then the food cannot be eaten on that *Shabbos*, unless it was 100% cooked before it was wrapped. If the wrapping occurred *B'Shogaig* (unintentionally, either because the person didn't know it was a forbidden act, or the person forgot that it was *Shabbos*), then the food can still be eaten after the fact (*B'dieved*)."

Mrs. Fine asked, "Rabbi, we have a lovely decorative cover for our electric urn. Are you saying we can't use it on *Shabbos*?"

"The initial approach (*L'chatchila*) is indeed not to use it. However," the Rabbi explained, "there are qualified Rabbinical opinions that rule after the fact (*B'dieved*), one could use them, even on a tea kettle on the *blech* that is on the stove top. The reason is because strictly speaking, *Hatmana* means that the top, bottom, and all sides of the food or container of food is wrapped. Your decorative cover slides over the urn, but it leaves the bottom uncovered."

"Rabbi, Rabbi, Rabbi", said Bert, shaking his head. "I think we have a problem. I like wrapping a squash or a yam in aluminum foil and putting it inside the *cholent* pot prior to *Shabbos*. And, I like taking a piece of cooked chicken cutlet (*schnitzel*) and wrapping it in foil and putting it on top of the *cholent* pot before I go to the Synagogue (*shul*) in the morning, so it will be warm when I get home. I never knew about the 'wrapping' issue."

"Bert, you are not to be denied!" was the Rabbi's retort. "*Hatmana* refers to wrapping food to maintain its heat. It is permitted to use foil as a container for food. Otherwise, the squash or yam would dissolve into the *cholent*, or the *schnitzel* would make the *cholent* pot greasy. Some Rabbinical authorities recommend that if you are using foil as a container, don't completely cover the food. Certainly, it would not be permitted to double wrap the chicken cutlet (*schnitzel*), because the first covering serves as the container, but the second covering is obviously to retain heat, which is a problem of *Hatmana*."

"Mr. and Mrs. Fine, we are off to a good start. We will continue, *IY"H* (*Im Yirtzeh HaShem* – G-d willing) next week. Enjoy hot food this *Shabbos*!"

Abridged Laws of the Shabbos Kitchen I

Sh'hiya (allowing food to be put on the stove top Friday afternoon and remain there into *Shabbos*).

Ideally, food in a pot should be fully cooked prior to *Shabbos*³. However, if the food is at least one-half⁴ or one-third cooked⁵, or a substantial portion of raw meat⁶ is placed in the pot just prior to Candle Lighting (18 minutes prior to Sunset Friday)⁷, food may remain on the stove top into *Shabbos*.

If the food is only slightly cooked, the stove's cooking surface (even if the elements or gas burners are not visible) requires a covering⁸. Today, this is accomplished with a *blech*, a covering made of material such as sheet metal. The *blech* serves to denigrate the quality of the heating elements or gas flame, which is an outward sign that the temperature is off one's mind and serves as a reminder not to adjust it⁹.

A two-piece crock pot with variable heat settings requires a *blech*. One solution is to line the base with a thin sheet of foil (without crumpling it¹⁰ to avoid issues of *Hatmana*). There are opinions that state a two-piece crock pot without a temperature dial does not require a *blech*¹¹. The use of a single piece crock pot is problematic, especially if it has a variable dial; some Rabbinical authorities permit it and some do not. Check with your local Orthodox Rabbi. Placing a piece of raw meat into a pot just prior to *Shabbos* obviates the requirement for a *blech*¹²; this provides another solution for using a single piece crock pot.

If one forgot to put a *blech* on the stove top prior to *Shabbos*, one may put on a previously used *blech* on the stove top on *Shabbos*. If a *blech* is not available, one may place a clean, used pot upside down on the stove top to serve as a *blech*. If the *blech* fell off on *Shabbos*, it may be put back on the stove top¹³.

³ *Sb"AO"Cb* 253:1, *M"B*

⁴ *R"MA* 253:1, *Cb"Y*

⁵ *Sb"AH"R* 253:13

⁶ *B"Y*, *M"PA* 4, *M"B* 9

⁷ *M"Sh* 36b

⁸ *M"Sh* 36b

⁹ *RMB"M*, *R"N*

¹⁰ This concern is a stringency (*Sb"KH*, p. 300).

¹¹ *Sb"KH*, p. 300

¹² *B"Y*

¹³ *Sb"AO"Cb* 253:3

The laws of *Sh'hija*, in the absence of a *blech*, apply to water (e.g., water in a tea kettle on the stove top). The water should be fully cooked prior to Shabbos. However, by the time *Shabbos* begins, it is sufficient if the water was cooked $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{3}$ of the time necessary to boil it.¹⁴

Chazara - Returning food to the metal sheet (*blech*).

Food that is not fully cooked should not be removed from a pot while it is on the *blech* on *Shabbos*. The issues involve stirring (*Magis*)¹⁵, and placing the lid back on the pot, both of which contribute to the cooking process.

If the food in the pot is fully cooked, the pot may be taken off the *blech*, some contents removed, and the pot returned¹⁶ under the following conditions:

- (1) there must be a *blech* on the stove top¹⁷
- (2) the food in the pot must be fully cooked¹⁸
- (3) the food must still be warm¹⁹
- (4) the pot must have remained in your hand²⁰
- (5) you must have had the intention (*Kavanah*) to return the pot when it was taken off the *blech* on the stove top²¹.

Food that is not fully cooked may not be stirred or ladled out while it is on the *blech*, nor when removed from the metal sheet (*blech*) until it has cooled. Even if the food in the pot is fully cooked, it may not be stirred or ladled out if the pot is on the stove top²². Fully cooked food may be stirred or ladled²³ by removing the pot from the *blech*, taking out some of the contents of the pot, and returning the pot following the rules of returning (*Chazara*). However, water that was boiled may be ladled out of an urn while it is on the *blech*²⁴, and it is not necessary to do *Chazara* to remove some of the urn's water.

Regarding (3), there is a difference between solid and liquid food. A solid food is dry or has a minimum amount of moisture. A liquid food has a significant amount of

¹⁴ *Sb"AH"R* 254:14

¹⁵ *SbK"Y*, p. 216, who includes ladling out food

¹⁶ *M"Sh* 36b

¹⁷ *R"Shi* to *M"Sh* 36b

¹⁸ *Sb"AO"Ch* 318

¹⁹ *M"A* 36

²⁰ *R"MA* 253:2

²¹ *R"MA* 253:2

²² *SbSbK"Y* 1:32

²³ *M"B* 318:113

²⁴ *SbSbK"Y* 1:33

fluid, or is 100% liquid (e.g., soup). Dry food must still be warm in order to return it to the *blech*²⁵. If the food is liquid, it may be returned to the *blech* as long as it is above about 71° C (160° F) according to the *Sephardic* view, the temperature at which the hand would recoil from it, known as *Yad Soledes Bo*. If the liquid has cooled down to below the temperature of *Yad Soledes*, but is still warm and at a temperature that it would be normally eaten, it may be returned to the metal plate (*blech*)²⁶ according to the *Ashkenazic* view. If the liquid is warm but not normally eaten at that temperature, or if it has cooled down completely, it may not be returned to the *blech*²⁷.

Regarding (4) and (5), *B'dieved* (the fall-back position) for (4): If you let go of the pot, it can be returned as long as you didn't put the pot on the ground or in the refrigerator. *B'dieved* for (5): If you didn't have the intention to return the pot when you took it off the *blech*, you can still return it if you kept your hand on it²⁸. There are opinions that permit the pot to be returned even in the absence of both (4) and (5).

Regarding (5), if the wrong pot was removed from the *blech* or a pot slipped off the *blech*, or a pot slipped out of one's hand and fell (even to the ground), it is permitted to return it to the *blech* if (1) – (3) are satisfied. Similarly, if the gas flames under a *blech* went out or an element burned out, or if the pot of food was placed on a *blech* that was over a stove top that was not operating, the pot may be returned to another *blech* if (1) – (3) are satisfied²⁹.

Chazara is permitted to a crock pot if it was made “*Goruf v’Kotum*” – a form of a *blech* has been inserted into the crock pot³⁰.

A dry, previously cooked food (e.g., *kugel* or chicken cutlet) should not be placed directly on the *blech* on *Shabbos* (because *Sh'hija* is only permitted prior to *Shabbos*). After the fact (*B'dieved*), the food may be eaten. However, it is permitted if the food is placed so far away from the heating element or gas flame that the *blech* top in that area is only warm³¹.

Food should not be placed directly onto a hot plate (a cooking element with an adjustable temperature dial)³², although a warming tray (that is not adjustable) is permitted³³.

²⁵ *M"A* 36, *M"B* 68, *I"M O"Cb* 4:74-31

²⁶ *R"MA* 318:15, *I"M O"Cb* 4:74-31

²⁷ Many *Poskim* on *Sb"A O"Cb* 318

²⁸ *M"B* 53

²⁹ *SbK"H* p. 350 – 363

³⁰ *Pirchei Shoshanim Hilchos Shabbos, Shiur* 1:17

³¹ *I"M O"Cb* 1: 94

³² *SbShK"H* 1-25

³³ *I"M O"Cb* 4:74-35

However, cold dry cooked food may be placed on top of a pot that is on the *blech* (which is on a stove top or which is on a hot plate) in order to warm it³⁴. Similarly, cold dry cooked food that was previously on the *blech*, removed, and placed on the ground (or the refrigerator) may be placed on top of a pot that is on the *blech*³⁵. Moreover, cold dry cooked food may be placed on the top of an urn or a radiator that is operating, even though it isn't covered with a *blech*³⁶.

Chazara is not permitted inside an oven that was left on for *Shabbos*³⁷, unless, for example, an “oven insert” (such as a metal box) that serves as a *blech* was placed inside the oven prior to *Shabbos*, in addition to the other conditions of *Chazara*.

Chazara to the *blech* is not permitted once food has been taken out of the original pot and placed into a new pot³⁸.

Hatmana (completely wrapping food or a pot of food).

The issue of completely wrapping food applies prior to *Shabbos* and once *Shabbos* has started. Prior to *Shabbos*, food may be completely wrapped with a substance that does not add heat, such as a towel or a cloth³⁹.

If the food is fully cooked, and the cloth falls off on *Shabbos*, it can be put back on, or even exchanged for a heavier cloth⁴⁰.

However, it is not permitted to completely wrap food before *Shabbos* with a substance or method that adds heat. Therefore, if food or a pot of food is on the *blech* (or on top of a pot that is on the *blech*, or on a warming tray, or on top of a radiator that will be working on *Shabbos*, etc.), it may not be completely wrapped with a towel or cloth prior to *Shabbos* in order to retain heat. Similarly, an unopened container of food may not be completely immersed in hot water to warm its contents⁴¹.

Once *Shabbos* begins, food may not be completely wrapped even with a substance that does not add heat, such as a towel or a cloth, in order to retain heat⁴².

If it is done with full knowledge of the law and that the day is *Shabbos* (*B'mazjid*), it is forbidden to eat the food on that *Shabbos*. If it was done *B'shogaig* (not knowing the

³⁴ *I"M O"Ch* 4:74-35

³⁵ *R"MA* 253:5

³⁶ *O"Sh*, p. 101

³⁷ *Sb"A O"Ch* 253:2, *I"M O"Ch* 4:74-26, *SbShK"H* 1-17

³⁸ *Sb"A H"R* 253:14

³⁹ *Sb"A O"Ch* 257:1

⁴⁰ *SbShK"H* 1:67

⁴¹ *SbShK"H* 1:65

⁴² *Sb"A O"Ch* 257:1

law or not remembering at the moment that the day was *Shabbos*), the food can be eaten as long as the food was fully cooked before it was completely wrapped to retain heat⁴³.

Covers made for electric urns or coffee makers, or tea kettles kept on the stove top, should not be used on *Shabbos*. After the fact (*B'dieved*), because the bottom of the urn or kettle is not covered, the hot water can still be used⁴⁴.

Hatmana is forbidden on *Shabbos* only when the intention (*Kavanah*) is for the purpose of keeping food warm. However, *Hatmana* is permitted if food or a container of food was wrapped for an alternative purpose⁴⁵. Therefore, if a person wrapped a piece of cold, dry food in foil to place it on a pot that is on top of the *blech*, and the foil is being used as a container for the food, *Hatmana* is permitted⁴⁶, (although it is best to leave a small opening in the foil when wrapping for an alternative purpose⁴⁷). The foil is being used to prevent the piece of *kishka* (meat and flour concoction) or *kugel* from making the top of the pot greasy or dissolving, etc., but not to keep the food warm. Similarly, food may even be completely wrapped on *Shabbos* with a cloth or towel if the purpose is to protect it from dust, bugs, or rodents⁴⁸.

However, the food should not be double wrapped in foil and then placed on top of a pot that is on the *blech*. Whereas the first covering is a container, the second covering serves to retain heat⁴⁹.

Crock pots may present a problem with regard to *Hatmana*. *HaRav* Shlomo Z. Auerbach, *HaRav* Yosef S. Elyashiv, and *HaRav* Ovadiah Yosef consider the base as a covering, and require some method to slightly lift the clay pot out of the base. According to *HaRav* Shlomo Z. Auerbach, one possibility is to place small metal blocks (e.g., tin) into the base, and rest the clay pot on top of the blocks, thereby lifting the clay pot slightly out of the base. However, *HaRav* Moshe Feinstein and *HaRav* Shmuel Vozner do not consider the base as a covering, obviating the need for the blocks⁵⁰.

⁴³ *Sb" A O" Ch* 257:1

⁴⁴ *Cb" A* 2-5; *O" HaSh* 253:24, 257:10

⁴⁵ *B" Y*

⁴⁶ *M" HaSh* 1:9-10, *O" HaSh*, p. 109

⁴⁷ *Pirbei Shoshanim Hilchos Shabbos, Shiur* 1:14, 16

⁴⁸ *Sb" A O" Ch* 257:2

⁴⁹ *HaRav* Eliyahu Falk

⁵⁰ See *Pirbei Shoshanim Hilchos Shabbos Shiur* 1:17.

Reference Abbreviations

B"Y – Bais Yosef
Ch"A – Chayei Adam
Ch"I – Chazon Ish
I"MO"Ch – Igros Moshe Orach Chaim
M"A – Mogein Avraham
M"B – Mishnah Brurah
M"HaSh – Meor HaShabbos
M"Sh – Mishnah Shabbos
O"HaSh – Orach HaShulchan
O"Sh – Otsros Shabbos
Pirchei Shoshanim Hilchos Shabbos – HaRav Dovid Ostroff
R"MA – R' Moshe Isserlis
RMB"M – Rambam (Maimonides)
R"N – Ran (Rabbenu Nissim)
R"ShI – Rashbi (R' Shlomo Yitzchaki)
Sh"A H"R – Shulchan Aruch HaRav
Sh"A O"Ch – Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim (Mechaber)
Sh"KH – Shabbos KeHalacha
ShShK"H – Shmiras Shabbos K'Hilchasa

Review Questions

1. Why are there laws governing actions before *Shabbos*, when the *Melachos* (Labors) apply to *Shabbos*?
2. To what extent does food need to be cooked before *Shabbos* if it is to be left in a pot on an uncovered stove top?
3. To what extent does food need to be cooked before *Shabbos* if it is to be left in a pot on a *blech* (metal sheet) that covers the stove top?
4. What are the criteria that need to be satisfied in order for a pot of food to be returned to the stove top?
5. How may food or containers with food in them be completely wrapped to retain their heat prior to *Shabbos*?
6. How may food or containers with food in them be completely wrapped to retain their heat after *Shabbos* has started?
7. Is it permitted to wrap *kisbka* (or other solid food) in foil and place it on top of a *cholent* (stew) pot prior to *Shabbos*?
8. Who should you ask regarding matters relating to your *Shabbos* kitchen?

Review Answers

1. Our Sages were concerned that one would violate *Shabbos*, and to avert this possibility they instructed us how to prepare food on Friday.
2. It is best that the food in the pot be completely cooked. However, if it is at least $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{3}$ cooked, it is permitted to remain on the stove top. Another solution is to place a substantial piece of raw meat into the pot prior to *Shabbos*.
3. The degree that the food is cooked in the pot is of no concern if the stove top is covered with a *blech*.
4. (a) the stove top is covered with a *blech*, (b) the food is fully cooked, (c) the pot is returned while the food in it is still warm, (d) one does not release the pot, and (e) one had the intent to return the pot prior to removing it. The fall back position permits returning the pot if, in addition to (a) – (c), either (d) or (e) was done, although some Rabbinical authorities are lenient in the absence of both (d) and (e).
5. Prior to *Shabbos*, food (or containers with food in them) may only be wrapped completely to retain heat with a substance that does not add heat (e.g., towel, cloth).
6. After *Shabbos* has started, food (or containers with food in them) may not be wrapped with any substance for the purpose of retaining heat.

PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM'S MAKING THE SHABBOS KITCHEN
LESSON 1 |

7. Yes, because the purpose for wrapping the *kishka* (or other food) is not to retain heat, but to prevent it from dissolving into the *cholent*. (To be cautious, prior to *Shabbos* poke small holes in the foil or leave a corner unwrapped – it will not only make the *kishka* taste better, but it also serves the purpose of getting into the habit of leaving a small opening to avoid wrapping food to retain heat.)
8. For practical applications of *Halacha*, you should always contact your local Orthodox Rabbi.

Hebrew, Yiddish, and Aramaic Glossary

- Avos* – (plural of *Av*) fathers/principal *Shabbos* labors
B'dieved or *B'diavad* – “after the fact” or fall back position
blech – covering (usually sheet metal) placed on a heat source
B'maz'id or *Maz'id* – purposefully doing a forbidden act
B'shogaig or *Shogaig* – unintentionally doing a forbidden act
Chazal – *Chachmeinu Zichronam L'Vracha* (Our Sages of Blessed Memory)
Chazara – to return
cholent – stew. Ingredients: don't ask, don't tell
Goruf v'Kotum – “coals removed or coals covered with ash”, to cover a stove top with a
blech
Halachos or *Hilchos* – Jewish Laws, plural of *Halacha*
HaShem – The Name, “G-d”
HaRav – The Rabbi, a higher Rabbinical authority
Hatmana – wrapping to store heat
Im Yirtzeh HaShem – If it will be G-d's Will, “G-d Willing”
Issurei d'Oraiso – Biblically forbidden
Issurei d'Rabbonim – Rabbinically forbidden
Kavanah – intent
kishka – in our times, a flour and meat gravy concoction
Kosher – fit for consumption by Jewish dietary law
kugel – baked noodle or potato casserole/pudding
Magis – stir
Melachos – prohibited *Shabbos* labors
Mitzvos – (plural of *Mitzvah*), Biblical Commandments and Rabbinical Enactments
Oneg – delight, enjoyment
Poskim – Rabbinical authorities
Shabbos – about 18 minutes before sunset Friday until about one hour after sunset
Saturday
Sh'biya – to let remain or lay; to leave a pot of food on the stove
Shiurim – lessons, plural of *Shiur*
Shul – Synagogue
Tolados – (plural of *Toldah*) Biblical derivatives/offsprings of principal *Shabbos* labors
Yad Soledes (Bo) – [temperature at which the] hand [would] recoil [if touched]

Questions and
answers

Q. Where does it say in the Scriptures “build barriers around the barriers?”

A. Leviticus 18:30 says, “You shall safeguard my charges.” Similarly, Deuteronomy 2:8 requires the erecting of a parapet as a safeguard to *Torah* law. This concept is reiterated in *Pirkei Avo*s (“Ethics of the Fathers”) 1:1 “make a safety fence around the *Torah*”. See further the discussion in *Talmud Moed Katan* 5a and *Yevamos* 21a. – R’ *Shlomo*

Q. I have several cats and I am afraid of leaving on an electric burner with a *blech* for concern that the cats might become curious. Can I keep the oven on to keep things warm, instead of using a *blech*?

A. You may leave food in the oven that is operating to keep the food warm, but not do *Chazara* (return the pot to the oven) once you have taken it out. (Some Rabbinical authorities permit *Chazara* to an oven if there is an oven insert, and a few Rabbinical authorities permit returning the pot inside the oven by placing a plate on top of the oven rack, and then returning the pot to the plate on the rack.. Remember that a covering to the heat source is but one of the five requirements necessary for *Chazara*. Furthermore, there are other issues involved, e.g., oven lights or if the oven is sealed, which is why most Rabbinical authorities do not permit *Chazara* to an oven.) – R’ *Shlomo*

Q. If the foil I used to wrap food to keep my kitties from being attracted to the food also retains heat, is it still permitted?

A. Yes, because your intention was to keep the cats away from the food, not to retain heat. Therefore, even if the heat is retained, it is irrelevant. Your thoughts are that important. – R’ *Shlomo*

Q. I have a question about your statement in Lesson One to consult one’s local Orthodox Rabbi on practical applications of *Halacha*. When it says *Aseh Lcha Rav*, does that mean the Rabbi where you pray? I attend a certain synagogue, but I study at another place, and occasionally there seems to be a difference of opinion. Who do I pick as my *Rav*?

A. The reference you cited, “Make yourself a *Rav*” from *Pirkei Avos*, answers the question. “Yourself” means the choice is up to you. It may be the *Rav* where you *Daven* (pray), where you learn, or someone from another city or country. However, you must remember that when you are in *Shul* (Synagogue), the *Rav* there is the final authority. When you are at *Kollel* (study hall for married students), the *Rav* there is the final authority.

Respect must always be shown to the *Rav*, because the only true anti-Semitism is hatred of the Rabbis, *Ch”vSh* (Heaven forbid); and the unfortunate way that this is demonstrated by a Jew is through *Bitul Kavod HaRav* (nullifying the honor of the *Rabbi*). This is one of the worst transgressions against the *Torah*. Sophomoric pronouncements such as “He is not the *Rav* in my community” is no mitigation. Rav Papa¹, a great *Talmudic* Sage, said that even one who refers to “those Rabbis” (100a) is a heretic (*Apikoros*) and has no share in the World to Come². Our greatest *Talmudic* commentator, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (*RS”I*) explains that such language is disrespectful and contemptuous, because the proper reference is “our Rabbis from such and such a place”.

After you have chosen your *Rav*, you must then ask if he is willing to accept the responsibility. If he agrees, from that point on, you should direct your personal questions that require a final ruling to that *Rav*, and his answer is binding. It is certainly permitted to have one *Rav* for questions of a certain nature (e.g., *Kashrus*) and another *Rav* for questions of a different nature (e.g., family relations). (On complex matters, and with the agreement of your *Rav*, either of you may wish to seek an opinion, or a P’sak (ruling), from a higher Rabbinical authority.) Obviously, you are free to learn from any *Rav*, *Chavrusa* (study partner), or from any event that occurs in your life; you may use that information in posing questions to your *Rav*. Much more should be said on this topic, but as this is a *Shabbos* kitchen project, it shall hopefully suffice. – R’ Shlomo

Q. How do I determine if food is at least one-third (or one-half) cooked?

A. Assessing whether food is one third (or one-half) cooked is not necessarily straightforward. The *Piskei Teshuvos* (a renowned *Halachic* authority) writes that the time taken for the food to reach a scalding temperature (*Yad Soledes Bo* – the temperature at which the hand recoils) should be excluded from the calculation, and that even then, a linear calculation may not be appropriate because the cooking process is not always uniform. That is why some Rabbinical authorities prefer food to be fully cooked prior to the start of *Shabbos*. – R’ Yechezkel

¹ *Talmud Sanbedrin*

² *Mishnah to Talmud Sanbedrin 90a*