

PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM'S MAKING THE SHABBOS KITCHEN

Shabbos Kitchen Lesson 2

Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Sawilowsky, West Bloomfield, Michigan, USA

Rabbi Dovid Botton, Miami, Florida, USA, *Sephardic* glosses

Rabbi Yechiel Conway, Leeds, England, editorial assistance
& *Shabbos* kitchen discussion list

Rabbi Shmilu Green, Lakewood, New Jersey, USA, editorial assistance

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Rehov Beit Vegan 99, Yerushalayim 03.616.6340
164 Village Path, Lakewood NJ 08701 732.370.3344 fax
1.877.Pirchei (732.367.8168)



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 Avos* (“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 way that this is demonstrated by a Jew is through “*Bitul Kavod HaRav*” (nullifying the honor of the *Rav*), which is one of the worst sins against the *Torah*. (Moreover, this principle applies equally if the *Rav* is *Asbkenazic*, *Sephardic*, *Chassidic*, *nonChassidic*, etc.) and I might add, sophomoric pronouncements such as “He is no *Rav* in my community” does not mitigate the sin in the least.

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 cooked?

A. Assessing whether food is one third cooked is not necessarily straightforward. The *Piskei Teshuvot* (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’ *Yechiel*

Questions?

Please send your questions on these lessons to ravshlomo@Shemayisrael.com. Also, an internet discussion group on these lessons is located at the following url: mail.shemayisrael.com/mailman/listinfo/shabboskitchen-discuss_shemayisrael.com.

Making Tea on Shabbos

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

“Bert?” was the reply in the receiver.

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

It was Rabbi Roth once again. “Nu, so how was your *Shabbos*? Did you enjoy hot food using the principles of *Sb’bija*, *Chazara*, and *Hatmana* as we discussed last week?”

Bert replied, “Rabbi, the hot food was wonderful! It was such a shame, though, that the price of keeping a *Kosher Shabbos* kitchen was that we had to top that delicious meal off with a glass of iced tea from the refrigerator.” Bert paused for a moment for effect and then continued, “It was like having a hot corned beef sandwich on white bread with mayonnaise, if you know what I mean. I suggested to my wife that she keep a pot of tea on the metal plate (blech), but she said that by the next day it would probably make the tea taste very bitter.”

“It is certainly possible to serve hot tea on *Shabbos*,” said Rabbi Roth. “I’ll meet you and Mrs. Fine in your kitchen later this week at our set time for Torah study, and I’ll show you how it is done.”

Later that week, Rabbi Roth again found himself in the Fines’ residence, sitting at the kitchen table with Mr. and Mrs. Fine. He placed a tea kettle that had water in it on a plate. He also assembled the following items: two empty cups, a plastic container with its lid, and a teabag.

“Lets imagine,” said Rabbi Roth, “that the plate is a blech on the stove top. The tea kettle has water in it, and I’m placing it on the plate. This simulates the situation on *Shabbos*. The tea kettle is called a *K’li Rishon*. A *K’li* is a vessel or object. The word *Rishon* means 1st.

“According to Jewish Law (*Halacha*), there are different vessels (*Keilim*), which is plural for a *K’li*). There is a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd *K’li*. The 1st is the vessel, such as the tea kettle in our case, which is on the blech. When the tea kettle is removed from the blech, and boiling water is poured into a second vessel such as a cup, that cup becomes a *K’li Shaini* or 2nd *K’li*. If contents of that cup are poured into a third vessel such as yet another cup, that other cup is called a 3rd vessel (*K’li*) or *K’li Shlishi*.”

Three vessels

Three Shabbos Vessels (Keilim)

1. Kettle on the Blech = *K'li Rishon* or 1st vessel
2. 1st cup = *K'li Shaini* or 2nd vessel
3. 2nd cup = *K'li Sh'lishi* or 3rd vessel

Bert turned to his wife and said, “I think it is time for some more note taking. I’ll take notes this week if you have your notebook handy.”

“Yes, Bert, I have the notebook here” she replied. “Rabbi, see what a nice husband I have?”

“You both make a lovely couple and have fine *Middos* (character traits),” said the Rabbi. “And, I know of no better way to refine one’s character than to learn *Hilchos Shabbos* and put them in to practice every week. Now, watch what I do to make hot tea.

“Let’s pretend that prior to *Shabbos*, I boiled about 8 fl. oz. of water, and I placed four tea bags to cook into the boiling water. After I let it sit for a while, I removed the tea bags. After this tea essence cooled, I placed it into this plastic container, and put a lid on it.”

“Rabbi, Rabbi, Rabbi” said Bert. “You need not explain that concept. I’m always being told to ‘put a lid on it!’”

Mrs. Fine laughed. “Bert,” she said, “you are so silly.” Turning to the Rabbi, she added, “I assume the lid is not required in terms of Jewish law; you are probably using it so it doesn’t spill?”

“Correct,” replied the Rabbi, “and later we’ll learn that there are other customs regarding where the tea essence is kept. Furthermore, there is nothing special about this recipe of water to number of tea bags – you may increase or decrease as you desire.

“Anyway, the next step is to take the tea kettle off the ‘blech’ (the plate in our example, Bert), and pour some of its contents into the first cup. The tea kettle is the *K’li Rishon* or 1st vessel, and the cup is the *K’li Shaini* or 2nd vessel. Water from a *K’li Rishon* can cook food, and that is why we must not pour it over uncooked food, or for that matter, put uncooked food into it.”

Temperature
that Cooks

“Do you mean to say” interjected Mrs. Fine, “that the water from the kettle can cook food even after I take the kettle off the blech, say, five or ten minutes later?”

“Yes,” responded the Rabbi. “The tea kettle is a *K’li Rishon* while it is on the blech, and it retains that status as long as the water in it is hot. We discussed the concept of the scalding temperature of (*Yad Soledes Bo*) last week, and at another time we will go into that topic with more detail. But, for now, it is important to know that, essentially, two temperatures are associated with *Yad Soledes Bo* depending on how it is being invoked. The principle is we use the temperature that would be stricter for the situation. In this case it is different from last week, and it would be about 40° Celsius or 104° Fahrenheit. Therefore, until the water cools to that level, it still has the capacity to cook.

“Notice that I’m taking the tea kettle and pouring some of its contents into the first cup” continued Rabbi Roth. “This cup is the *K’li Shaini* or second vessel. As a general rule, once the water has reached the second vessel, *Chazal*, our Rabbis, concluded the water can no longer cook. Mrs. Fine, you appear to have a question?”

“Rabbi”, she said, “I have two questions. First, what if the temperature in the second vessel is hotter than 104° F? Second, if the water can no longer cook, why are you putting – and I don’t mean chocolate pudding Bert” she said glancing at her husband with a smile on her face, “the tea essence into this second cup, which is the 3rd vessel? Why didn’t you just put the tea essence into the 1st cup?”

“These are two excellent questions! I love it when I get good questions like these, because as a Rabbi, I’m always wondering if my speeches are putting – and I don’t mean chocolate pudding either Bert – people to sleep.

“The first question is what happens if the water in the *K’li Shaini* is hotter than 104° F? According to Jewish Law, the water isn’t capable of cooking for two reasons: (1) by being transferred from one vessel to another the water is in the process of cooling and in order to cook the temperature must either be steady or rising, and (2) the walls of the 2nd vessel are cold and are absorbing the heat, unlike the 1st vessel (*K’li Rishon*), where the walls of the vessel are hot by being on the blech and are contributing heat to the cooking process.

“The second question is why I didn’t put the tea essence into this 1st cup, the 2nd vessel called a *K’li Shaini*, if in so doing the water can no longer cook. The answer is because, in general, the water is not capable of cooking, but, there are exceptions. Thin, soft material may indeed be cooked by this water. Therefore,” Rabbi Roth said lifting up the 2nd cup, “we need a 3rd vessel (*K’li Sh’lishi*).

“I open the lid of the plastic container containing the tea essence, and I pour as much as desired, according to the strength of the tea that I like to drink, into the 2nd cup. Then, I pour the contents from the first cup into the second cup and ‘voila’, we have hot tea for *Shabbos*!

“Two quick points,” continued the Rabbi. “(1) The laws of Shabbos prohibit dyeing or coloring, but in general, that doesn’t apply to food. Therefore, it doesn’t matter if you first put the tea essence into the 3rd vessel (*K’li Sh’lishi*) and then the water from the second vessel (*K’li Shaini*), which does not make clear water change its color, or you reverse the order where adding the tea essence does color clear water. (2) Some have the custom to place the tea essence, **prior to Shabbos**, in a pot and place the pot on a warm part of the blech. Then, some of the contents from this pot are transferred to a *K’li Shaini* (2nd vessel) when making tea on *Shabbos*. There are good *Halachic* reasons to do this, and as long as you remember the rules of returning (*Chazara*), feel free to do it. Some prefer this method because they say the tea is warmer or tastes better when the essence is warm from the blech instead of being cold.

“Rabbi Roth, this process for making tea will work well for me because I prefer herbal teas. However, Bert is a fan of common orange pekoe tea, which requires sugar and lemon, which you didn’t mention. Does that create any difficulties?” asked Mrs. Fine.

“Sugar or lemon does not present a difficulty, but their laws are more involved, and are covered in the topic I want to speak about next in depth – *Bishul* – which means the laws of cooking. Making tea falls under the laws of cooking, but in the absence of sugar and lemon, its rules are straightforward, as we’ve discussed this evening.”

Rabbi Roth concluded, “Because of these and related issues, may I suggest that for this *Shabbos*, Bert, please forgo the sugar and lemon? Next week, we’ll begin learning the laws of *Bishul* in detail, and when we have finished, you will have sufficient knowledge on how to add sugar and lemon to hot tea.”

“Thank you, Rabbi, for the lesson”, said Bert. “This *Shabbos*,” he said turning to his wife, “its tea for two!”

Abridged Laws of the Shabbos Kitchen

The vessel (e.g., kettle or urn) that is on the blech or stove top is called a *K'li Rishon*. The vessel has this status even after it was taken off the metal sheet (blech) until the contents cool below scalding temperature (*Yad Soledes Bo*) – about 40° C or 104° F in this application. (There are a variety of temperatures relating to *Yad Soledes*, a topic to be discussed in a future lesson.) One should be careful not to remove a *K'li Rishon* from off the blech with a damp cloth or place a *K'li Rishon* that is still hot on a wet surface¹.

Therefore, for example, water from a *K'li Rishon* may not be poured directly onto uncooked food because it will cook the food², and an uncooked food cannot be placed into the *K'li Rishon* because it will become cooked³. Cooking is a forbidden *Shabbos* labor called *Bishul*⁴, which will be discussed at length in a future lesson.

However, if the water was first poured from the kettle into a cup (second vessel or *K'li Shaini*), it can then be poured from that cup onto uncooked food. *Halachically*, the water has cooled off to the point that it doesn't cook.⁵

There are exceptions⁶ to this rule because thin, soft foodstuffs, such as tea leaves can be cooked even from water in a *K'li Shaini*.⁷ (Note that whenever tea leaves are mentioned here, the reference is to tea leaves that are loose, or in a tea bag, or in a tea infuser.) Therefore, the methodology for making tea involves the use of a *K'li Shlishi* (3rd vessel)⁸ to further cool the water and the use of essence (some call it tea sense). The methods for making tea on *Shabbos* are as follows:

Preferred (Four Step) Method¹⁰:

1. Before *Shabbos* place a number of teabags (or a large amount of tea leaves into a tea ball/infuser) into hot water. After the liquid has reached the desired strength, remove the teabags or tea leaves.
2. On *Shabbos*, pour a little of this liquid into a *K'li Shlishi* (third vessel, or in this case, cup #2).
3. Take the kettle (*K'li Rishon*) off the blech (or open the tap of the urn) and pour water into the *K'li Shaini* (second vessel or cup #1), which is clean and dry. (Have in mind to return the kettle to the blech after pouring the water.)

¹ *Sh"KH* 3:3

² *Tosafos* to *Shabbos* 39a

³ *Sh"A O"Ch* 318:9

⁴ *Mishnah Shabbos* 7:2

⁵ *M"B* 318:47

⁶ *Sh"A H"R* 318:12 excludes water and oil.

⁷ *Mishnah Shabbos* 145b, *Mishnah Shabbos* 39a, *Sh"A O"Ch* 318:4

⁸ *M"B* 318:47

¹⁰ *M"B*, *Sh"HT* 65

4. Pour the water from cup #1 into cup #2 (that has the tea essence in it).

There is a *Melacha* of dyeing¹¹ (or coloring) on *Shabbos*, but in general, it doesn't apply to food. Many Rabbinical decision makers (*Poskim*) indicate it is a stringency (*Chumra*) to put the tea essence in cup #2 first, and then pour the water into that cup. (Indeed, some *Poskim* state it is an unnecessary *Chumrah*.) Therefore, if water from cup #1 was first poured into cup #2, it is permitted to then pour in the tea essence.

Secondary Methods:

A. If you live in an area where there is a proper *Eruv* (which permits carrying outside on *Shabbos*), you may borrow tea essence from a neighbor. Then, continue with preferred method outlined above¹².

B. Prior to *Shabbos*, cook a lot of tea leaves in a little bit of water, stirring to make sure all of the leaves are cooked. (There is no Jewish Legal reasoning (*Halachic*) for this recipe; it is merely designed to cook the tea leaves with minimal water to preserve the flavor and aroma of the tea leaves for later use.) Then, save the tea leaves (i.e., remove the water). Let the tea leaves dry. Substitute these pre-cooked tea leaves for tea essence in the steps of the preferred method outlined above.¹³

C. On *Shabbos*, put cold water and tea bags or a tea infuser in a clear glass or plastic jar. Put the jar in the window to face the sun¹⁴. Allow the jar to remain in the sunlight to the desired strength of tea essence. Substitute some of this liquid into the 3rd vessel (*K'li Sh'lishi*) for tea essence in the steps outlined in the preferred method above. (Note that in pouring the essence out of the jar, the liquid should not be poured below the level of the tea bags or the tea infuser, to avoid the category of *Shabbos* labor (*Melacha*) of separating (*B'reirah*)¹⁵. If the liquid will be consumed immediately, this rule does not apply, and one may continue pouring the essence out below the level of the tea bags to the bottom of the jar.¹⁶)

Tertiary Method:

Substitute a teabag (or tea infuser) for tea essence in the *K'li Sh'lishi* in the steps outline in the preferred method, or, place the teabag in the *K'li Sh'lishi* first and then pour in the water from the 2nd vessel (*K'li Shaini*). These are probably the most common methods used to make tea on *Shabbos*, and many Rabbinical Authorities (*Poskim*) permit them without reservation.

However, there are various issues involved. Do not squeeze the tea bag; instead, remove it with a spoon. Do not dip the tea bag into the water, remove it, and

¹¹ *Mishnah Shabbos* 7:2

¹² *Pirchei Shoshanim Hilchos Shabbos Shiur* 1:22

¹³ *M"B* 39 to *Sh" A O"Ch* 318

¹⁴ *Talmud Shabbos* 146b

¹⁵ *Talmud Shabbos* 139b, *M" A* 15 to *Sh" A O"Ch* 319:14

¹⁶ *Sh" A H"R* 18, *M" B* 55

dip it again. Do not pour water out below the level of the tea bag in the cup, unless the liquid poured out will be consumed immediately.

After the fact (*B'dieved*)

If water from a *K'li Rishon* was poured into tea essence, the tea may be consumed. One should not reprimand those who have this practice¹⁷, although it is better to heat the tea essence with water from a *K'li Shaini*.

An incident that occurred (*Ma'aseh Sh'baya*)

In the winter of 5748 (1988), *HaGaon* Rabbi Chaskel Grubner, the Director (*M'nabel*) of the Council of Orthodox Rabbis of Greater Detroit (*Vaad HaRabbonim*), was taking a *Shabbos* stroll with his wife and stopped in for a visit. He asked for a cup of tea, but there was no essence prepared. The offer was made to use a teabag in a 3rd vessel (*K'li Shlish*), but he politely declined.

Reference Abbreviations

B"H – *Bi'ur Halacha*

M"A – *Mogen Avraham*

M"B – *Mishnah Brurah*

M"Sh – *Mishnah Shabbos*

Pirchei Shoshanim Hilchos Shabbos – *HaRav* Dovid Ostroff

Sh"A H"R – *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*

Sh"A O"Ch – *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim (Mechaber)*

Sh"KH – *Shabbos KeHalacha*

Sb"Hz – *Sha'ar HaTziyun*

¹⁷ *B"H* to *Sh"A O"Ch* 318

Review Questions

1. What are the three vessels involved in making tea?
2. What is the preferred method of making tea?
3. What must one be careful about when using a tea bag or a tea infuser instead of tea essence?
4. Who should you ask regarding matters relating to your *Shabbos* kitchen?

Review Answers

1. *K'li Rishon*, *K'li Shaini*, and *K'li Sh'lishi*.
2. Put tea essence in the *K'li Sh'lishi*. Pour the boiling water from the *K'li Rishon* into the *K'li Shaini*. Then, pour the water from the *K'li Shaini* into the *K'li Sh'lishi*.
3. a) Do not squeeze the tea bag. b) Remove the tea bag or tea infuser with a spoon and not with your hand. c) Do not pour the water out below the line of the tea bag or tea infuser unless you will be consuming the tea immediately.
4. Please feel free to ask us questions, as they pertain to these lessons, by contacting *Pirchei Shoshanim* at ravshlomo@Shemayisrael.com. However, for practical applications of *Halacha*, you should always contact your local Orthodox Rabbi.

Hebrew, Yiddish, and Aramaic Glossary

B'dieved (or *B'diavad*) – “after the fact” or fall back position

B'reirah (or *Borer*) – separating

Bishul – cooking

blech – covering (usually sheet metal) placed on a heat source

Chazara – to return

Chumrah – optional, strict manner of fulfilling a Mitzvah; a stringency

Eruv – or *Eruv Chatzayros* - literally “mix together” where an open area is made into a private domain, permitting carrying

HaGaon – literally “the genius”, in our generation an appellation for an eminent Talmudic scholar

Halachically – vernacular English conjugation of *Halacha*

Hatmana – completely wrapping to store heat

Hilchos – Jewish Laws, plural of *Halacha*

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)

Ma'aseh Sh'haya – literally “a deed that happened”, an incident of note

Melacha – one of the 39 labors necessary to build the Holy Temple and is thus forbidden on *Shabbos*

Middos – character traits

Mitzvah – one of the 613 Biblical Commandments, or Rabbinical Enactments

M'nabel – Director

nu – Yiddish monosyllable that takes on the meaning of the tone of voice in which it is uttered.

Pirkei Avos – literally “Chapters of the Fathers, “Ethics of the Fathers”

Poskim – Higher Rabbinical authorities who issue practical rulings. Singular: *Posek*

Shabbos – about 18 minutes before sunset Friday until about one hour after sunset Saturday

Sh'hya – to let remain or lay; to leave a pot of food on the stove

Shiur – class, lecture

Vaad HaRabbonim – Council of Rabbis

Yad Soledes Bo – [temperature at which the] hand [would] recoil [if touched]