

PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM'S MAKING THE SHABBOS KITCHEN

# Shabbos Kitchen Lesson 1

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## Sh'hiya, Chazara, & Hatmana

### *Preface*

It is written in Jewish liturgy “In G-d’s goodness, G-d continuously renews each day the work of Creation.” The Jewish People have an important role in this continuous creation, as it states in Ethics of the Fathers (of Rabbi Nossan) that *HaShem* (G-d) left a small portion of Creation unfinished. It is the service of mankind to connect in partnership in continuously completing the Creation.

Human actions (as well as speech and thoughts) during the six days of the week, specifically as they relate to Torah and *Mitzvos* (Commandments), are the creative acts that complete the Creation. However, on the seventh day, *Shabbos*, *HaShem* rested. How, then, is it possible to partner with *HaShem* in completing the Creation on *Shabbos*?

It is accomplished through learning and fulfilling the *Halachos* of *Shabbos*, the Laws of the Sabbath. There are Positive Commandments that require one to actively rise and perform certain acts. There are Negative Commandments that require one to refrain from certain acts.

“Remember the *Shabbos* day to keep it holy.” Our Sages say, “Whoever properly observes *Shabbos* is equivalent to one who observes all of the Commandments of the Torah.” Ethics of the Fathers also notes that an ignorant person cannot be righteous. A person must learn the *Halachos* of *Shabbos* in order to observe it properly. Therefore, everyone should undertake learning the laws of *Shabbos*.

It is imperative to consult with your local Orthodox Rabbi on questions arising in practice. It is our hope that these lessons will benefit those who have not had the opportunity to learn in a traditional manner, and serve as a review for those who have previously learned these *Halachos*.

- Biblical law     The Jewish Laws (*Halachos*) pertain to 39 labors (*Melachos*) that are Biblically prohibited on *Shabbos*. They are called *Avos* (fathers; or *Av*, which is singular), and they in turn have many derivatives called *Tolados* (offspring rulings), which are also Biblically prohibited on *Shabbos*. An example of an *Av* is planting (e.g., a seed) and one of its *Tolados* (derivatives) is watering plants. This means that the Scriptures proscribes planting seeds and watering plants on *Shabbos*.
- Rabbinical injunctions     Just as one erects a barrier around a delicate object, in order to prevent accidental destruction, so too, *Chazal* (an abbreviation meaning “our Sages of blessed memory”) erected barriers around the Biblical prohibitions (*Issurei d'Oraissa*), in order to prevent accidental violations.
- These barriers, or Rabbinical prohibitions (*Issurei d'Rabanan*), are binding because G-d commanded our Sages to erect them. The Scriptural verse says, “you shall erect barriers around my barriers.”
- Format of the Lessons     The basics of *Shabbos* laws as they pertain to the kitchen are embedded within the dialogue. A list of references and sources appear in the second section, and occasionally it will be accompanied by a summary of the *Shabbos Halachos* (laws pertaining to *Shabbos*). The third section consists of review questions and answers. The final section contains a glossary of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Yiddish terms. Please send your questions on these lessons to [ravshlomo@Shemayisrael.com](mailto:ravshlomo@Shemayisrael.com).

A discussion group on these lessons is located at the following url:  
[mail.shemayisrael.com/mailman/listinfo/shabboskitchen-discuss\\_shemayisrael.com](mailto:mail.shemayisrael.com/mailman/listinfo/shabboskitchen-discuss_shemayisrael.com).

## Sh'hiya, Chazara, & Hatmana

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 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 Kosher 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 has 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,” injected 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 ½ cooked, the food is considered cooked and may remain on the

stove top. But, you do bring up an important issue, which is judging if the food is at least ½ 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?”

“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.”

“I’ve got to ask, Rabbi” said Bert with a chuckle. “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’ (*Chazara*). 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, and glancing at her husband, she said “this is the note we will keep near the stove to help us remember the procedure”.

Rabbi Roth continued, “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 (cholent) 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, 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 of *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 Kitchen 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 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’Shogag* (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 *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, *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 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. But 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

**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*. However, if the food is at least one-half<sup>2</sup> or one-third cooked<sup>3</sup>, or raw meat<sup>4</sup> is placed in the pot just prior to Candle Lighting (18 minutes prior to Sunset Friday)<sup>5</sup>, 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 covering<sup>6</sup>. 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 it<sup>7</sup>.

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 it<sup>8</sup> to avoid issues of *Hatmana*. There are opinions that state a two-piece crock pot without a temperature dial does not require a blech<sup>9</sup>. 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<sup>10</sup>; 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

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<sup>1</sup> *Sb"AO"Ch* 253:1, *M"B*

<sup>2</sup> *R"MA* 253:1, *Ch"Y*

<sup>3</sup> *Sb"AH"R* 253:13

<sup>4</sup> *B"Y*, *M"A* 4, *M"B* 9

<sup>5</sup> *M"Sh* 36b

<sup>6</sup> *M"Sh* 36b

<sup>7</sup> *RMB"M*, *R"N*

<sup>8</sup> *Sb"KH*, p. 300

<sup>9</sup> *Sb"KH*, p. 300

<sup>10</sup> *B"Y*

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 top<sup>11</sup>.

The laws of *Sh'bjya*, 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.

**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*)<sup>12</sup>, 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 returned<sup>13</sup> under the following conditions:

- (1) there must be a blech on the stove top<sup>14</sup>
- (2) the food in the pot must be fully cooked<sup>15</sup>
- (3) the food must still be warm<sup>16</sup>
- (4) the pot must have remained in your hand<sup>17</sup>

(5) you must have the intention (*Kavanah*) to return the pot when it was taken off the blech on the stove top<sup>18</sup>.

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 top<sup>19</sup>. Fully cooked food may be stirred or ladled<sup>20</sup> 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<sup>21</sup>, and it is not necessary to do *Chazara* to remove some of the urn's water.

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<sup>11</sup> *Sb"A O"Cb* 253:3

<sup>12</sup> *SbK"H*, p. 216, who includes ladling out food

<sup>13</sup> *M"Sh* 36b

<sup>14</sup> *R"ShI* to *M"Sh* 36b

<sup>15</sup> *Sb"A O"Cb* 318

<sup>16</sup> *M"A* 36

<sup>17</sup> *R"MA* 253:2

<sup>18</sup> *R"MA* 253:2

<sup>19</sup> *SbSbK"H* 1:32

<sup>20</sup> *M"B* 318:113

<sup>21</sup> *SbSbK"H* 1:33

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 fluid, or is 100% liquid (e.g., soup). Dry food must still be warm in order to return it to the blech<sup>22</sup>. If the food is liquid, it may be returned to the blech as long as it is above about 71° C (160° F), a temperature 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)<sup>23</sup>. 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<sup>24</sup>.

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 it<sup>25</sup>. 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 under a blech that was over a stove top that was not operating, the pot may be returned to another blech if (1) – (3) are satisfied<sup>26</sup>.

*Chazara* is permitted to a crock pot if it was made “*Goruf v'Kotum?*” – a form of a metal plate (blech) has been inserted into the crock pot<sup>27</sup>.

A dry, previously cooked food (e.g., kugel or chicken cutlet) should not be placed directly on the blech on *Shabbos* (because *Sh'hya* is only permitted prior to *Shabbos*). *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 warm<sup>28</sup>.

Food should not be placed directly onto a hot plate (a cooking element with an adjustable temperature dial)<sup>29</sup>, although a warming tray (that is not adjustable) is permitted<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> *M"A* 36, *M"B* 68, *I"M O"Ch* 4:74-31

<sup>23</sup> *R"MA* 318:15, *I"M O"Ch* 4:74-31

<sup>24</sup> Many *Poskim* on *Sh"A O"Ch* 318

<sup>25</sup> *M"B* 53

<sup>26</sup> *ShK"H* p. 350 – 363

<sup>27</sup> *Pirchei Shoshanim Hilchos Shabbos, Shiur* 1:17

<sup>28</sup> *I"M O"Ch* 1: 94

<sup>29</sup> *ShShK"H* 1-25

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 it<sup>31</sup>. 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<sup>32</sup>. 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<sup>33</sup>.

*Chazara* is not permitted inside an oven that was left on for *Shabbos*<sup>34</sup>, 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 pot<sup>35</sup>.

**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 cloth<sup>36</sup>.

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 cloth<sup>37</sup>.

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 contents<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> *I"M O"Cb* 4:74-35

<sup>31</sup> *I"M O"Cb* 4:74-35

<sup>32</sup> *R"MA* 253:5

<sup>33</sup> *O"Sh*, p. 101

<sup>34</sup> *Sb"A O"Cb* 253:2, *I"M O"Cb* 4:74-26, *SbShK"H* 1-17

<sup>35</sup> *Sb"A H"R* 253:14

<sup>36</sup> *Sb"A O"Cb* 257:1

<sup>37</sup> *SbShK"H* 1:67

<sup>38</sup> *SbShK"H* 1:65

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 heat<sup>39</sup>.

If it is done with full knowledge of the law and that the day is *Shabbos* (*B'maz'id*), it is forbidden to eat the food on that *Shabbos*. If it was done *B'shogaig* (not knowing the 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 heat<sup>40</sup>.

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 used<sup>41</sup>.

*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 purpose<sup>42</sup>. 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 permitted<sup>43</sup>, (although it is best to leave a small opening in the foil when wrapping for an alternative purpose<sup>44</sup>). The foil is being used to prevent the piece of kishka 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 rodents<sup>45</sup>.

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 heat<sup>46</sup>.

Crock pots may present a problem with regard to *Hatmana*. *HaRav* Shlomo Z. Auerbach, *HaRav* Yosef S. Eliyashuv, 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*

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<sup>39</sup> *Sb"A O"Ch* 257:1

<sup>40</sup> *Sb"A O"Ch* 257:1

<sup>41</sup> *Ch"A* 2-5; *O"HaSh* 253:24, 257:10

<sup>42</sup> *B"Y*

<sup>43</sup> *M"HaSh* 1:9-10, *O"HaSh*, p. 109

<sup>44</sup> *Pirchei Shoshanim Hilchos Shabbos, Shiur* 1:14, 16

<sup>45</sup> *Sb"A O"Ch* 257:2

<sup>46</sup> *HaRav* Eliyahu Falk

Shmuel Vozner do not consider the base as a covering, obviating the need for the blocks<sup>47</sup>.

### Reference Abbreviations

*B"Y* – *Bais Yosef*  
*Ch"A* – *Chayei Adam*  
*Ch"I* – *Chazon Ish*  
*I"MO"Ch* – *Iggros Moshe Orach Chaim*  
*M"A* – *Mogain Avraham*  
*M"B* – *Mishnah Brurab*  
*M"HaSh* – *Meor HaShabbos*  
*M"Sh* – *Mishnah Shabbos*  
*O"HaSh* – *Oruch 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* – *Rashi* (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*

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<sup>47</sup> See *Pirchei Shoshanim Hilchos Shabbos Shiur* 1:17.

### 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 kishke (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 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.

7. Yes, because the purpose for wrapping the kishke (or other food) is not to retain heat, but to prevent it from dissolving into the cholent. (To be cautious, one might poke small holes in the foil or leave a corner unwrapped – it will not only make the kishke taste better, but it also serves the purpose of getting into the habit of leaving a small opening to avoid completely wrapping food to retain heat.)
8. Please feel free to ask us questions, as they pertain to these lessons, by contacting *Pirchei Shoshanim* at [ravshlomo@Shemayisrael.com](mailto:ravshlomo@Shemayisrael.com). However, 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  
*Kitzur Hilchos Shabbos* – Abridged Laws of *Shabbos*  
*Kosher* – fit for consumption by Jewish dietary law  
kugel – baked noodle or potato casserole/pudding  
*Magis* – stir  
*Melachos* – prohibited *Shabbos* labors  
*Mitbach* or *Ba'Mitbach* – kitchen or “in the kitchen”  
*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'hija* – to let remain or lay; to leave a pot of food on the stove  
*Shiurim* – lessons, plural of *Shiur*  
*Tolados* – (plural of *Toldah*) Biblical derivatives/offsprings of principal *Shabbos* labors  
*Yad Soledes (Bo)* – [temperature at which the] hand [would] recoil [if touched]