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לעילוי נשמת ר' יצחק מאיר בן אליהו ובריינא בת אברהם ע"ה ור' גדליה בן אברהם מנחם הכהן ומרים בת ישראל ע"ה

## Preparing Coffee on Shabbos

### Rabbi Nesanel Kipper

*What is the ideal way to make a cup of coffee on Shabbos?*

*Does using microground coffee on Shabbos pose a problem?*

One of the 39 *melachos* (forbidden acts of labor on Shabbos) is *bishul*, cooking. Preparing a hot cup of coffee on Shabbos presents several potential issues regarding *bishul*, as will be discussed in this article. To understand the potential pitfalls, a number of halachic principles must be introduced:

**The melacha of bishul:** The Torah prohibition of *bishul* (cooking) is defined as heating a food on or near a heat source to a point that is considered minimally cooked. For solids, this minimal level is known as *kima'achal ben Drusa'i*, like the food of ben Drusa'i<sup>1</sup> (Rambam Hilchos Shabbos 9:5). Although *kima'achal ben Drusa'i* is not yet fully cooked, it is nevertheless deemed edible enough to be considered *bishul*. There is a dispute whether *kima'achal ben Drusa'i* is one-half or one-third cooked; the halacha follows the more stringent view (Mishna Berura 318:64).

Liquids, on the other hand, are considered cooked when they reach *yad soledes bo*, hot enough that the hand recoils upon touching. There is considerable discussion among the *poskim* as to what temperature constitutes this level of heat. According to Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe Orach Chaim 4:74:3), 110°F is the minimum temperature that may possibly be *yad soledes*, while 160°F is certainly considered *yad soledes*. One must follow the more stringent view, which will vary based upon circumstances.

Although the Torah prohibits specifically heating something to the point where it is considered "cooked," the Sages forbade putting food on heat that could cook it, even if one intends to remove the food before it cooks.

**Ain bishul achar bishul:** The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 618:4,16) says that food which has already been fully cooked may be reheated again on Shabbos, since *ain bishul achar bishul*, already-cooked food cannot be cooked again<sup>2</sup>. At what point is food deemed cooked? Although one who cooks food to the level of ben Drusa'i has already transgressed *bishul*, by continuing to cook the food and make it better, *bishul* continues to occur until the food is fully cooked.

The above is true for solids. Reheating liquids, however, is a subject of dispute among the Rishonim (medieval commentators). The reason for this is that cooking a liquid is defined as making it hot. It therefore follows that cooled liquid loses its status of being cooked. The Shulchan Aruch (ibid. 318:4) rules in accordance with the opinion that one may not reheat liquids that are no longer at the temperature of *yad soledes*. Ashkenazim, however, follow the opinion of the Rema (ibid.) who rules leniently that one may reheat liquid as long as it did not completely cool off; this is defined by the Shulchan Aruch Harav (ibid.:9) as being suitable to serve as a warm drink.

There is a debate among the *poskim* whether a solid which dissolves into a liquid is considered a solid or a liquid. The Magen Avraham (ibid:32; see

<sup>1</sup> Ben Drusa'i was a Mishnaic-era bandit who was constantly on the run and thus ate his food only partially cooked.

<sup>2</sup> It must be noted that even when a previously-cooked food may be reheated, one may not place it directly upon a heat source such as a fire or hot plate. The conditions under which one may return such food to a heat source are complex and beyond the scope of this article.

Machatzis Hashekel ibid.) that it is still considered a solid, and would thus not present an issue of *bishul* on Shabbos. However, many authorities (Mishna Berura 318:71; Rabbi Akiva Eiger, Orach Chaim 318:9; Shulchan Aruch Harav Orach Chaim 318:18) argue that one must be stringent and view it as a liquid.

**Bishul achar tzli/afiya:** Even though one may reheat food once it has been fully cooked, Chazal differentiated between *bishul* (cooking) and *tzli/afiya* (roasting/baking). Cooking a previously baked or roasted item is known as *bishul achar tzli/afiya*. Cooking is done by heating the food inside water, whereas roasting occurs by heating the food without the use of water. (Baking, too, is done without water, but the term baking is limited to bread-type items while "roasting" is used for other foods.) Since cooking and baking/roasting are two distinct methods of cooking, cooking something which has been previously roasted or baked is considered *bishul*. There is an opinion that it is not a problem, but the ruling follows the stringent opinion, and one may not cook a previously roasted or baked item (Shulchan Aruch ibid:5)<sup>3</sup>.

**Kli rishon:** A *kli rishon* (lit., first vessel; a vessel with food that was heated directly on the heat source) has the ability to cook anything placed inside, as long as it remains at the temperature of *yad soledes bo* (which would be the stringent 110°F) (Shulchan Aruch ibid: 9). Therefore, all the restrictions regarding *bishul* apply to a *kli rishon* as well.

**Kli sheini:** The Gemara (Shabbos 40b) teaches that a *kli sheini* (lit., second vessel; a vessel whose contents were directly on a heat source but were then transferred to a second vessel that was not heated). In general, a *kli sheini* lacks the ability to cook. However, there are some foods which Chazal determined are easily cooked (known as *kalei habishul*) which can cook even in a *kli sheini*. Due to lack of knowledge of exactly which foods fall into the category of *kalei habishul*, most foods are treated stringently as *kalei habishul* and cannot be placed in a *kli sheini* (Magen Avraham ibid.:18). There are some exceptions which may be placed in a *kli sheini*: water and oil (Sha'arei Tzion 318:18) are not considered *kalei habishul*; previously cooked and cooled liquids, since the uncertainty of *kalei habishul* combined with the additional uncertainty of whether they can even be cooked again suffice to permit (Mishnah Berura ibid:39); and soluble foods, due to the possibility discussed above that they are, indeed, considered solid foods (Mishnah Berura ibid.: 71).

**Iru'i kli rishon:** *Iru'i*, or pouring, liquid from a *kli rishon* is a debate among the Rishonim as to its ability to cook. There are those that say it has the ability to cook like a *kli rishon*, while others argue that it cannot cook and has the status of a *kli sheini* (see Tosafos Shabbos 42b s.v. *avak*). A third view (see Tosafos Zevachim 95b s.v. *irah*) says that *irui kli rishon* has the ability to cook the external shell of the food like a *kli rishon* (thus posing a problem of cooking on Shabbos). The Magen Avraham (Orach Chaim 318:32) rules in accordance

<sup>3</sup> One may not roast a previously cooked item either, based upon the same reasoning. However, this is only a problem if a high level of heat is used. Reheating previously-cooked solid food with dry heat that is not very hot (such as atop another pot) is not a problem (needs source)

with the third view. Therefore, one must be careful not to pour water from a *kli rishon* directly onto food that may not be cooked in a *kli rishon*.

There is a question regarding pouring hot water from a *kli rishon* into cup that earlier held hot water and still has some now-cooled droplets of water left in the cup. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Orach Chaim 1:93) says that this is permitted, due to a combination of factors: the droplets are insignificant there is no intention in cooking them, and there are those who permit re-cooking a previously-cooked liquid.

***Kli shlishi*:** A *kli shlishi* (lit., third vessel) is a vessel that contains food that was previously in a *kli sheini*. *Kli shlishi* is a matter of debate among the *poskim*. The Chazon Ish (Orach Chaim Ch. 52) says that a *kli shlishi* has the same ability to cook as a *kli sheini*; the food loses its ability to cook only when it is no longer *yad soledes*. The Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 318:28) says that although a *kli shlishi* cannot cook like a *kli sheini*, there are certain things that cook so easily, even a *kli shlishi*<sup>4</sup> can cook them. The Aruch Hashulchan gives tea leaves as an example of an item that could cook in a *kli shlishi*. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Orach Chaim 4:4:74 Laws of Bishul 15) rules that a *kli shlishi* cannot cook at all. He says that although the hot water can extract the flavor of the tea even in a *kli shishi* is not due to its cooking ability, as this occurs even in warm water that is less than *yad soledes*.

**Solid foods:** There are some halachic authorities (Maharshal cited in the Shach, Yoreh Deah 103:8; Mishnah Berura, 447:24) who rule that a solid food maintains its status of a *kli rishon* even when put onto or into a second, or even multiple, vessels. However, others rule that a solid has the same rules as a liquid (see Shach Yoreh De'ah 105:8 citing Darkei Moshe 105:5). The *poskim* say that one should be stringent and avoid placing uncooked food with a solid food, no matter how many vessels the food has been transferred to. However, one may place a previously cooked item, even a liquid, together with the hot solid food in a *kli sheini*. Although, as discussed earlier, one must normally be stringent regarding previously-cooked liquids, in this case one may be lenient (Igros Moshe, Orach Chaim 4:74:4).

**Instant Coffee:** With the above principles understood, the question of preparing coffee of Shabbos can be examined.

Instant coffee is made from dried coffee extract. Similar to brewing regular coffee, the extract is produced by brewing ground coffee beans, although the liquid is more concentrated. After brewing, the water is removed and a powdered or particulate extract remains.

There are two main ways the water is removed:

**Spray-drying:** Coffee extract is sprayed into very hot air, which causes the liquid to evaporate rapidly.

**Freeze-drying:** The liquid coffee is frozen and cut into small fragments, which are then dried at a low temperature under vacuum conditions (Nescafe uses the freeze-drying process, while most other companies use the spray-drying method [Orthodox Union]).

At first glance, one would say that since instant coffee is a solid, one is merely reheating a solid food which has already been cooked and may thus be reheated even in a *kli rishon*. However, as noted earlier, a soluble solid may be considered a liquid. Since the coffee will dissolve in the water, it should be treated as a liquid, which can undergo a second cooking, and placing it in a *kli rishon*, or even *irui kli rishon*, should be problematic. Placing it in a *kli sheini*, however, would be permitted, since, as discussed above, one may place

<sup>4</sup> Seemingly, the Aruch Hashulchan would, like the Chazon Ish, rule that this is true for any vessel so long as the food is *yad soledes*.

a previously-cooked liquid in a *kli sheini*.

However, Rabbi Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv (cited in Meor Hashabbos 3:42 fn. 76) ruled that spray-drying is considered roasting. Although the coffee is first cooked, the subsequent roasting gives the dried coffee the status of a roasted, not cooked, item. Placing the coffee even in a *kli sheini* would thus pose a problem, since one would have to treat the coffee as a possible *kalei habishul*. According to this ruling, one would need to place the coffee in a *kli shlishi* (and one could then pour the water from the *kli sheini* directly on it). However, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (ibid. fn. 2) rules that since the “roasting” does not really change the state of the coffee granules from a “cooked” state to a “roasted” state, the coffee would still be considered cooked.

With regard to tea or ground coffee which has not yet been cooked, there are many *poskim*, including the Chazon Ish and Aruch Hashulchan (cited above), who rule that one may not put them even in a *kli shlishi* since even a *kli shlishi* can cook *kalei habishul*. It should be noted that R' Moshe Feinstein (cited above) is lenient and permits putting tea in a *kli shlishi* based on the premise that *kli shlishi* does not cook.

**Microground coffee:** Microground coffee is very finely ground roasted coffee. Microground coffee is generally sold combined with instant coffee. Because it is uncooked, it raises some new issues of *bishul*.

The Pri Megadim (Orach Chaim 253 Mishebtzos Zahav 13) rules that when dealing with food that is has both solid and liquid (such as meat with gravy), its status is determined by whichever food is the majority. Some suggest that this concept may be applied to the microground-regular standard blend. Most of this mix is standard instant coffee (Starbucks uses 3 percent microground for its Via), and would thus have the same status as standard instant coffee.

However, the matter is not that simple. The Pri Megadim is discussing meat with a small amount of gravy. At most, the gravy poses an issue of reheating a previously-cooked liquid, which may be treated more leniently, as discussed earlier, since some say it may be reheated like a previously-cooked solid. Microground coffee, however, has never been cooked, and could be full-blown *bishul*; the Pri Megadim may not have intended his leniency for such a case.

Furthermore, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe Orach Chaim 4:74 Hilchos Bishul 4) says not to rely on the Pri Megadim's leniency even with precooked liquid, unless there is a great need.

The question now becomes whether microground coffee is similar to tea in that it cooks very easily. If that is the case, the aforementioned debate regarding placing tea leaves in a *kli shlishi* would seemingly apply here as well. If one follows the opinion of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein that any and all foods may be placed in a *kli shlishi*, there is certainly no problem with making microground coffee in a *kli shlishi*. However, even if one does not normally rely on Rabbi Feinstein's leniency for tea, there is still room for leniency in the case of microground coffee. *Kli shlishi* is a stringency due to our lack of knowledge of which foods are considered *kalei habishul*; perhaps this coffee is not in this category. Even if it is, there is the leniency of the Pri Megadim, which would view this blend as standard instant coffee, can be applied. Furthermore, although microgrounds are not already cooked, they are certainly roasted. One can add the additional leniency, though not normally relied upon, of those who rule that cooking after roasting is not a problem.

In conclusion, while there may be grounds to be stringent and avoid using microground coffee on Shabbos, there is certainly a great deal to rely upon to permit making it in a *kli shlishi*.

## ***Points to Ponder:***

***Does adding sweetener or creamer pose any additional issues on Shabbos?***

***Does adding the coffee to the water pose a problem of tzove'a, dyeing, on Shabbos?***

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