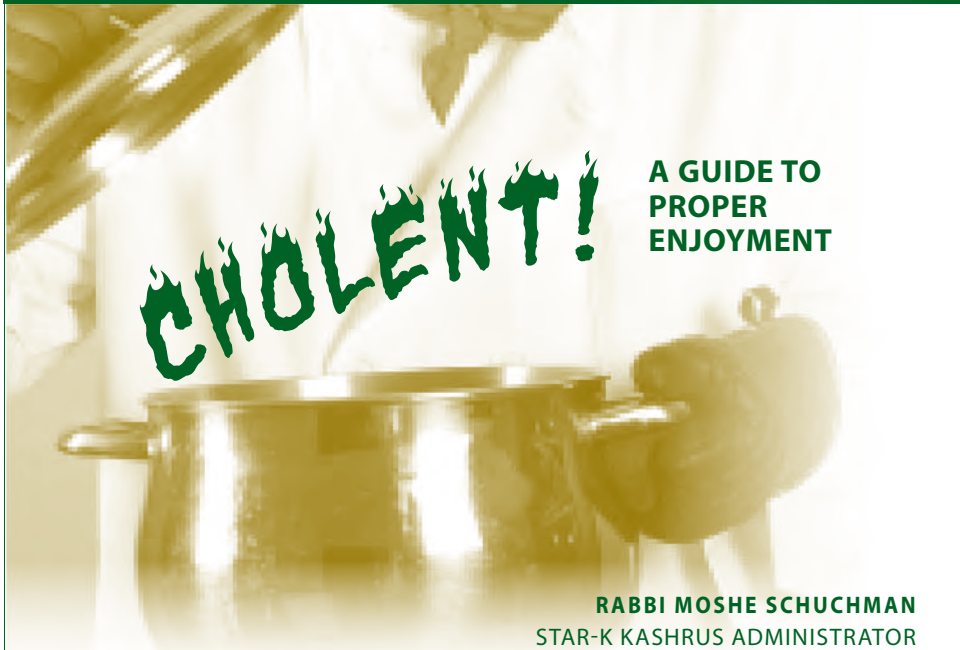


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CHOLENT!

**A GUIDE TO
PROPER
ENJOYMENT**

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STAR-K KASHRUS ADMINISTRATOR

The savory smell of *cholent* greets us as we awaken on *Shabbos* morning. The word “*cholent*” was coined by the progenitors of Ashkenazic Jewry who settled in the Alsace region of France, over 12 centuries ago, and likely derives from the Old French word *chalant* meaning heat.¹ *Cholent* covers an array of concoctions, ranging from the typical potatoes, meat, barley, beans and onions, to avant-garde vegetarian and simple *Pesachdik* versions; every household has its ‘secret’ ingredient. Whatever one calls it and however they prepare it, whether Sefardic *chamim* or German *gruenkern*, it is crucial to adhere to *halacha* while delighting in this permanent fixture of the *Shabbos* menu. The following guidelines address common *halachic* issues in the preparation and consumption of *cholent*.²

EATING CHOLENT – THE MITZVAH

One fulfills the *mitzvah* of *Oneg* by enjoying good food on *Shabbos*.³ The *Ba'al HaMaor*⁴ cites a view asserting that there is a specific *takanah*, formal Rabbinic obligation, to eat hot food on *Shabbos*.⁵

Rav Moshe Heinemann *shlit"u* explains that eating *cholent* on *Shabbos* morning fulfills the *din* according to the *Ba'al HaMaor*, since it would not be possible to keep it hot until morning unless it was kept on a heat source. Hot soup on Friday night, however, even if kept on a flame, may not fulfill this *halacha* since its warmth can also be maintained through insulation alone.⁶

Eating *cholent* on *Shabbos* day also has significance, since it commemorates the miracle of the *mon*. Each weekday, *mon* collected for one day would spoil overnight, while *mon* collected on *Erev Shabbos* remained fresh the next morning.⁷

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1. In modern English, “nonchalant” denotes a cold, uninterested posture. An early mention of the word is found in *Ohr Zarua* (Austria, early 13th century), *Hilchos Erev Shabbos* Siman 8.
 2. The *halachic* positions presented here follow Ashkenazic *psak*; Sefardim should consult their *halachic* authority.
 3. The *mitzvah* of *Oneg Shabbos* derives from *Yeshaya* 58:13. See *Rambam Hilchos Shabbos*, chap. 30. *Rosh* (*Shabbos* 3:1) writes that the assiduous devotion of Jews for this *mitzvah* sometimes influences *psak halacha* leniently in regard to Rabbinic ordinances concerning food preparation on *Shabbos*.
 4. *Shabbos* 16b in *Rif*.
 5. The *Ba'al HaMaor* attributes unusual stringency to this obligation, and asserts that one who does not eat hot food on *Shabbos* is suspect of subscribing to the heretical interpretation that the *Torah* prohibits maintenance of heat sources on *Shabbos*. Using a softer tone, the *Rema* (*O.C.* 257, end) only condemns someone who does not allow hot food in his home, but does not mention an obligation to eat it. The *Magen Avraham* adopts a middle position and allows someone to eat cold food if hot food would be injurious to his health. The implication of his ruling is that someone who merely does not enjoy hot food should still make an effort to fulfill the *minhag* and eat some (Rav Nissim Karelitz, *Chut Shani* 2:28:12, cited in *Dirshu* edition of *M.B.*).
 6. Although the *Ramo* writes “*u'mitzvah l'hatmin*,” this can be read to mean insulating with a heat generating substance (*hamosef hevel*). *Chut Shani*, cited in *Dirshu* ed., disagrees and holds that food (but not beverages) kept hot in a thermos bottle also fulfills the *minhag*.
 7. *Rash Serilio* (*Yerushalmi Brachos*, end chapter 7) says this is the reason for the principle of *kavod hayom adif* (*Pesachim* 105a), that one should accord more honor and prominence to the daytime meal. *Yosef Ometz* (#641), a compendium of German *minhagim*



Eating her CURDS... no way

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If Miss Muffet was a conscientious seminary girl, sitting down to a meal of curds and whey would not be so simple. There is much to consider. Was the milk *Cholov Yisroel*? Does the milk have to be *Cholov Yisroel*? Was the starter culture *Cholov Yisroel*? What rennet was used to coagulate the milk? Did the *mashgiach* add the coagulants to make the curds and whey? Are all curds and whey created equal?

Let's examine the facts. Although there are hundreds of types of cheese, they still have to undergo the same basic processes starting with pasteurized milk. The milk that is being converted into cheese is pasteurized so that any harmful bacteria will be killed. Depending upon the type of cheese produced, the milk may be separated to lower the milk fat content of the milk. After pasteurization, the milk is pumped into a cook vat where a starter culture containing specific bacteria is added. The bacteria in the starter culture forms acids in the milk and lowers the pH of the milk to a critical acidity level. It is the culture which gives different cheeses their special characteristics. Every variety of cheese needs to be “cooked” at a specific temperature so that the culture can work. If the specific temperature is not maintained, the bacteria in the starter

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Eating *her* CURDS... *no way*



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culture fail to multiply and the cheese process could not continue. Some cheeses are cooked at low temperatures within 86°F-96°F. Other cheeses are cooked at much higher temperatures. After the culture is thoroughly blended, a substance containing enzymes known as rennet is added to the milk. It is the rennet that allows the milk to coagulate and set. The coagulated milk is formed into a smooth, custard-like solid called the curd. Finally, the curd is ready to be cut which means that the cheesemaker breaks up the curd, separating a rich, cloudy liquid from the solid pebble-like curds. The liquid cloudy water is known as whey, and the pebble-like curds are the basis of the cheese.

In earlier generations, in order to make kosher cheese it was necessary to use rennet from an animal that was properly slaughtered and koshered. The *halacha* prohibits cheese that was coagulated with non-kosher rennet or non-kosher enzymes. Natural rennet is derived from the lining of a calf's stomach. Today, microbial rennet is widely used. This rennet is produced by growing the protein on microorganisms. Microbial rennet is readily available with reliable kosher certification. Even if the rennet and starter culture are kosher, our Rabbis have decreed that in order for the cheese to be kosher a *Yehudi* (a Jew who is restricted to the laws of *kashrus*) must put the starter culture rennet and/or other coagulation media into the milk.¹ If not, the cheese would be forbidden.² The Rabbinical non-permitted cheese is known as *gevinas akum*.

Cheese can be made only from milk of *behaimos tehoros*, kosher species.³ Based on this phenomenon, some *Poskim* maintain that if the milk that is being used for cheesemaking has been designated at the time of milking to make cheese, this milk is not subject to *cholov akum* i.e., milk that was not supervised by a *mashgiach* (a *Yehudi* supervisor) and remains *cholov hamuteres*. This means that non-supervised milk can be used to make kosher cheese. It is the Star-K policy to only use supervised milk for *Cholov Yisroel* cheese.

There are hundreds of different varieties of cheeses - soft, hard, mild, sharp aged and processed. There are cheeses that are used for baking, cheeses that are used for cooking, and cheeses that are used as an ingredient in other food and industrial applications. These ingredient cheeses are known as casein products.

What is casein? Casein is the main protein found in milk and subsequently found in the cheese curds. In the past, casein was used typically for industrial applications as an adhesive for plywood, sizing for paper, or as an ingredient for paint. In the 1960's, casein was developed for food applications. Today, casein is used in a plethora of food applications. It can be used as an emulsifier in coffee whiteners, a stabilizer in ice cream, or a thickener in soups, gravies, or whipped toppings. It can also be used to provide texture to pasta, nutritional food bars or bakery products.

How is casein manufactured? The main ingredient of course is milk. To manufacture casein, one must use skim milk; therefore, the milk must be separated into cream and skim milk. The skim milk is then pasteurized and cooled, and is either inoculated with lactic acid if acid casein is being manufactured, or in the case of rennet casein, natural or microbial rennet is added. The milk is then incubated, and after the desired pH is reached the product is heated to approximately 110°F. This results in the coagulation of the product into a soft gel, and the cheese is then cut so that the curds and whey separate. The curds are then dried on a fluid bed drier to a moisture level of 10-12%, and the dried casein is then milled, sifted and packaged into bags.

Acid based casein can undergo further processing to create other casein products known as caseinates. Caseinates are used in other food ingredient

applications. When the wet casein is mixed with sodium hydroxide, the resulting product is known as sodium caseinate. This is a popular ingredient which, among other things, may be used as an emulsifier in coffee whiteners, a nutritional ingredient in bakery products, nutritional food bars and beverages, as well as a thickener in soups and gravies. Casein can also be combined with calcium (lime) to create calcium caseinate, an ingredient in cereals such as Special K.

Does casein have a *halachic* status of cheese? Is there a difference between acid based casein and rennet based casein? In both instances, whether acid or rennet is added to the milk, curds and whey are formed. Practically speaking, a rennet based product is closely likened to hard cheese like Muenster or Cheddar, while acid based cheese is akin to cottage cheese whose curds are made through an acid application, rather than through rennet. Do the *Poskim* view both types of curds equally? For that we have to go back to Miss Muffet's queries and analyze the situation.

Obviously, the milk that is used to manufacture casein has to be the same milk that is used in the manufacture of cheese. Although regular milk has to be *Cholov Yisroel* and not *cholov akum*, according to some *Poskim* milk used for casein is permissible as long as the milk is designated to the manufacture of casein products.⁴ Similarly, the rennet and the acids have to be kosher. It seems to be a forgone conclusion that rennet based casein, which is manufactured in the same manner as hard cheese (e.g. Cheddar, Muenster, etc.) would require a *mashgiach* to add the coagulant, or else the rennet based casein would be considered *gevinas akum* and forbidden, like non-kosher cheese.

What about acid based casein and the caseinates made with acid based casein? Does the *mashgiach* have to add the coagulant? Similarly, does a *mashgiach* have to add the acid to make cottage cheese, or for that matter the vinegar, to make Ricotta cheese? Is there a fundamental difference between the two? The question was posed to R' Moshe Feinstein *zt'l* regarding cottage cheese.⁵ In his response, he cites opinions amongst the *Rishonim* that say there is a fundamental difference between natural rennet based cheese, microbial rennet based cheese, and acid based cheese. Therefore, one could be *makil* (lenient) with cheeses such as cottage cheese made with acid, due to the fact that if left out long enough, the milk would curdle without the assistance of the acid.

Other *Rishonim* maintain that there is no difference between the various types, and the *mashgiach* would have to add the acid to make cottage cheese as he would when making conventional cheese. Since the *Rabbonim* made a *gezaira* (decree) about *gevinas akum*, the restriction applies across the board.⁶ R' Moshe told the questioner that due to the lenient opinions, one need not make a public declaration; however, he intimates that the *halachic* status of *gevinas akum* applies to cottage cheese, as well. This is also the position of the Star-K.

This opinion is not shared by other kosher certifying agencies regarding casein products, as well as cottage cheese. Hence, one will find certifications on many dairy products such as coffee whiteners, cereals, nutritional bars, etc. Although there are those who are lenient with powdered milk and powdered whey, even if the casein was powdered, it would present a greater *halachic* issue even to those who accept products made with powdered milk. Due to the fact that casein is considered to be *gevinas akum* before drying, the prohibition would still remain intact even in its powdered form.

Maybe Miss Muffet should have gone *Pareve*.



1 Chochmas Adom Y.D. 67:7, Shach Y.D. 115:20 (Teshuvus Maharam M'Rottenberg).
2 Y.D. 115:2.
3 Y.D. 115:2 Rema.

4 Chochmas Adom 67:7, Y.D. 115:2 Rema.
5 Igros Moshe Y.D. II:48.
6 Y.D. 115, Shach 19, Gra Y.D. 115:13.



“She is too nervous to come to the phone,” said the woman, referring to the mother of the *Bar Mitzvah* boy, who had just prepared a huge pot of chicken soup for the upcoming *seudas Shabbos*. The woman then related the following story to me. The *Bar Mitzvah* boy, who was home from school on the Friday before the big *Shabbos*, had warmed up some pizza in the toaster oven on a piece of aluminum foil. After completing his lunch, he crushed the used foil into a ball and attempted to shoot it into the garbage can. The foil ball missed the trash and landed in the large pot of chicken soup, simmering on the stove in preparation for his *seudas Bar Mitzvah*! The woman on the phone got right to the point. “We discarded the foil. Does the soup need to be thrown out, and do we need to start again?” she asked. We made a quick calculation of the volume of foil and any dairy residue on it, versus the amount of soup in the pot. It was clear that there was sixty times more soup than the dairy foil and residue. “*Muttar*,” I declared, to an audible sigh of relief on the other end of the line.

This case was just one example of an unintended mixture, where the *halachah* of *Bitul B’shishim* applies. A review of these laws will illustrate when the rule of *batel b’shishim* applies and when it does not.

It should be noted that most *kashrus* agencies do not rely on *bitul*. This means that Star-K policy is that products must be 100% kosher to be granted certification. Star-K does not allow companies to add non-kosher ingredients.

The following *halachos* relate to accidental mix-ups and highlight the general issues regarding *bitul*. *Bitul* is one of the most detailed, complex, and lengthy issues in all of *Shulchan Aruch*. A brief article cannot cover the myriad of cases of *bitul*. When questions arise, individuals should consult with their *Rav* or *posek*.¹

I. WHERE DOES THE ONE TO SIXTY RATIO COME FROM?

The *Mishna*² tells us that not only is non-kosher food forbidden to eat, but any taste of that food is also not allowed. This is known as “*taam k’ikur*,” the taste is like the food (i.e. it is like the prohibited food). Therefore, if non-kosher food falls into a pot of kosher food, thereby imbuing the kosher food with a non-kosher flavor, we apply the rule of *ta’am k’ikur* and the once kosher food is now non-kosher, even though the non-kosher food was removed. If, however, no non-kosher taste remains, the product is permissible because the non-kosher is “*batel*,” nullified.

How can one know if the food possesses non-kosher taste without tasting it himself? The *Shulchan Aruch*³ suggests asking an *akum* to taste some of it. He can tell you if there is still any taste of the non-kosher food.⁴

The *Rama*⁵ holds that in our times, we can no longer rely on an *akum* to conduct a taste test. Therefore, this test cannot generally be used. The *Rama* says we know the non-kosher is *batel* if there is “*shishim*” – 60 times more kosher than non-kosher. The basis is as follows: The *Gemara*⁶ learns the *halacha* of “*shishim*” from the part of the *karbon* of the *Nazir*, referred to as the “*z’roah b’shaila*” – the foreleg of the ram after it had been cooked together with the ram.⁷ The ram⁸ was eaten by the *Nazir*, even though it was cooked together with the *z’roah* which only *kohanim* could eat. How could a non-*kohen* eat something cooked with the *z’roah* that was only fit for *kohanim*? The answer is that the ram was 60 times the volume of the *z’roah*. From here we derive the general rule of “*shishim*,” if there is 60 times more kosher than non-kosher the food may be eaten after any noticeable non-kosher food has been removed.⁹

1. The article is written according to *minhag Ashkenaz*. Some of these *halachos* are different for *Sefardim*. Consult your *Rav*.
 2. *Chulin* 96b.
 3. *Yoreh De’ah* (Y.D.) 98:1, based on the *Gemara Chulin* 97 a-b.
 4. The same taste test can be done if dairy falls into a pot of meat. If the *akum* cannot detect any dairy, it is nullified and the food may be eaten. For a full discussion as to whether this *akum* must be a chef or expert taster, and whether the taster can know why he is being asked to taste the food, see *Shach* (98:2) and *Taz* (98:2).
 5. Y.D. 98:1. This is the *minhag Ashkenaz*. Under certain conditions, *Sefardim* will rely on the *akum* tasting the food. Consult your *Rav*.
 6. *Chulin* 98a-b, based on the explanation of *Rashi* “*Ushnayhem*” and “*Bahadi Basar*.” See *Tosfos* “*U’mahn D’amor*,” who says the *halacha* of *shishim* is “*kabalach hoisa b’yadam*,” known through *mesorah* (tradition). *Z’roah b’shaila* is an “*asmachta*.”
 7. *Bamidbar* 6:19.
 8. *A karbon Shlamim*.
 9. If there is still a non-kosher taste, even when the *tafus* is less than one-sixtieth, it is prohibited. As to whether this prohibition is *d’Oraisa* or *d’Rabanan*, see *Shach* Y.D. 98:29 and *Chidushei Reb Akiva Eiger* (ibid).

One can assume that if there is 60 times more kosher than non-kosher food, the taste of the non-kosher food is no longer detectable and is permissible to eat. “60 times” is determined by volume (and not by weight).¹⁰ This means the volume of kosher must be 60 times greater than the volume of non-kosher.

However, if the amount of kosher is less than 60 times the non-kosher food (i.e. the non-kosher comprises more than 1.6% of the entire mixture),¹¹ the mixture is not kosher even after the non-kosher food has been removed, since we assume there is still non-kosher *ta’am* (taste) in it.¹² The same applies to milk and meat. This means if meat falls into milk, and the meat does not constitute more than one-sixtieth of the mixture, the milk remains kosher.¹³ However, if the meat is more than one-sixtieth of the milk, the entire mixture is deemed not kosher.¹⁴



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II. ITEMS THAT ARE NOT BATEL

There are various cases when we do not apply the *din* of *bitul*, where *Chazal* say “*aflu b’elef lo batul*” – these non-kosher items are not nullified even if mixed in one thousand, and the entire mixture is not kosher:

1 A *Davar Hama’amid* is something that “creates” a particular product. A classic example of this is non-kosher animal rennet used to make cheese.¹⁵ Without the enzymatic reaction caused by the rennet, there would be no cheese. Hence, even if the milk is sixty times the rennet, the finished product is not kosher.¹⁶

2 A *Davar Sheyaish Lo Matirin* is something prohibited at the time it was mixed with kosher food, that will become permissible at a later time.¹⁷ Such an item is not *batel*, even if it is in the kosher product at less than one-sixtieth. The classic example is an egg that is laid on *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov*. One may not eat it until after *Shabbos* (or *Yom Tov*). If this egg became mixed with other eggs, one may not eat any of these eggs because the forbidden egg is a *davar she’yaish lo matirin* and its prohibition will cease when *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov* ends. *Rashi*¹⁸ explains one may not rely on *bitul* when he can simply wait until the prohibition expires with the passing of time.¹⁹ According to some opinions, another example is when pieces of non-kosher cutlery are mixed in with kosher cutlery and one cannot differentiate between them. One must *kasher* all the pieces (if it is relatively easy to do so)²⁰ since the cutlery becomes permissible through *kashering*.²¹

3 *Berya* – A complete creature (e.g. an insect), whether dead or alive, is never *batel*.²²

4 *Intentionally Mixed In* – One may not mix even a small amount of non-kosher food into kosher food.²³ This is known as “*ain mevatalin issur l’chatchila*.” Similarly, one may not put a small amount of milk into a very large pot of meat, even though the milk will be *batel b’shishim*. If one did this

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10. See *Pischei Teshuva* Y.D. 98:2.
 11. The *Shach* Y.D. 98:26 says this applies to non-kosher food that is prohibited *min haTorah* or *midrabanan*.
 12. If non-kosher food was mixed into a pot of stew in a ratio of, for example, one to fifty, the entire pot of stew is *treif*. If some of the stew then fell into another pot of food at a ratio of 1:3, although the stew is more than one-sixtieth of this pot, the amount of *issur* from the original non-kosher food is less than one-sixtieth. Nonetheless, in general, the stew is not *batel* because we consider the entire stew as *treif*, not just the original non-kosher flavor within the stew. This is known as *chatcha na’asis neva’ila* (*chana’n*). See *Rama* Y.D. 99:5. This is always true with regard to milk and meat mixtures, and also solid non-kosher mixtures (e.g. *lach b’yavesh*). If the mixture is liquid non-kosher (*lach b’lach*), a *Rav* should be consulted. Furthermore, *Sefardim* are generally lenient unless it is milk and meat.
 13. If the meat is still *nikher* (i.e. it can be seen), the meat must be removed and discarded as it is now *assur* due to the non-*batel* milk taste in it.
 14. The above applies if the food was hot. If it was cold, consult a *Rav* as under certain conditions the food may be kosher. Also note, whenever we indicate “meat in milk,” in general a similar *halacha* will apply to milk falling into a pot of meat. If we indicate “milk in meat,” in general a similar *halacha* will apply by meat in milk.
 15. Of course, cheese that was produced by a gentile is generally not kosher even if he uses kosher rennet, because of the prohibition of *gvinas akum*.
 16. Y.D. 87:11.
 17. See Y.D. *Siman* 102.
 18. *Beitz* 3b. See *Ran* (*Nedarim* 52a) for a second explanation.
 19. For example, after *Shabbos*.
 20. See *Rama* Y.D. 102:3.
 21. See *Shach* Y.D. 102:8, who discusses different opinions regarding this case. See also *Pischei Teshuva* 102:6 (and what he says in the name of the *Tzalach*).
 22. Y.D. 100:1. Other examples of “complete” include *Gid Hanasheh* and *Aiver Min Hachai*.
 23. Y.D. 99:5.

CHOLENT!

A GUIDE TO PROPER ENJOYMENT



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Some observe that just as the *mon* was tastier on *Shabbos* morning than it was the previous day,⁸ similarly *cholent* is a food whose taste improves the longer it stews.

KEEPING THE CHOLENT HOT

One may not leave uncooked food over an open flame on *Shabbos*, even if it was placed there before *Shabbos*. *Chazal*⁹ enacted this prohibition called *shehiya*, due to the concern that someone may come to adjust the flame and violate the *Torah* prohibition of *ma'avir* (lighting a fire). The *Mishnah Berurah* (B.H. 253:1) recommends following the view in the *Shulchan Aruch* that food must be cooked fully prior to the onset of *Shabbos*,¹⁰ to the extent that it will not be enhanced by further cooking. If necessary, one may rely on the lenient opinion that it is enough for the food to be half cooked and, in extenuating circumstances, even only one-third cooked.¹¹

Cholent continually improves the longer it cooks. Therefore, ideally, *cholent* should never be left over an open flame. To circumvent the prohibition of *shehiya*, *Chazal* required one to demonstrate that he is no longer interested in adjusting the temperature. This is accomplished by rendering the fire *garuf v'katum*, shoveling away the coals or sprinkling them with ash.¹²

Today, a gas or electric stovetop is made *garuf v'katum* by covering the burners with a *blech* (Yiddish for metal sheet). *Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l*¹³ adds that it is also preferable to cover or remove the knobs, since this is where temperature adjustments are made. Glass stovetops may shatter if they are covered; therefore, based on the position of *Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l*, *Rav Heinemann* rules that it is sufficient to just cover or remove the knobs or control panel.

Hotplates and crockpots contain heating elements that become red hot. Although these elements are surrounded by a metal casing, they still have the status of an open fire. Therefore, the heating surface should be lined with a *blech* or a few sheets of aluminum foil, and the knobs should be removed or covered. *Poskim* make an exception for non-adjustable hotplates that can only be used at a single temperature, and thereby do not require any additional covering.

Using an oven to keep food warm is more problematic because the thermostat reacts to the entry of colder air when the door is opened. Although the rabbinic prohibition of *shehiya* is remedied

by covering the controls, opening the door may violate *ma'avir* by causing the flame to either turn on or remain on longer.¹⁴ *Rav Heinemann shlita* permits opening the door of a running oven in order to remove food, provided that the oven is emptied at that time.¹⁵ Thus, one may not remove soup from a hot oven on Friday night and leave the *cholent* inside until morning.

A word of caution: If the *cholent* is not yet **fully cooked**, one must take great care not to do anything that will hasten the cooking process. Doing so is called *kiruv bishul*, and is a potential *Torah* prohibition.¹⁶ For instance, if the lid on the crockpot is not completely situated, one may not fix it; if the pot on the *blech* is not directly over the fire, one may not move it closer.¹⁷

ADDITIONAL CROCKPOT CONCERNS

The heating element in a standard crockpot typically runs along the bottom and partially up the sides. Some *Poskim* are concerned that this constitutes a violation of *hatmanah*, which prohibits insulating a pot of food with a heat generating substance, even prior to *Shabbos*. Raising the pot by placing a few stones or marbles underneath the ceramic insert alleviates this problem. Other *Poskim* hold that since a crockpot is recognized as a device for cooking and not for insulating, there is no issue of *hatmanah*.¹⁸ It is permissible to set a timer to turn off the crockpot automatically, after the *cholent* will be served.



(Frankfurt, 16th-17th century), mentions that this principle is the basis for the *minhag* to eat *cholent* during the daytime meal. See also *Aruch HaShulchan siman* 289:2.

8. According to one interpretation in *Mechilta* (Beshalach), the term "*lechem mishnah*" means "*lechem meshunah*", to say that the *mon* of *Shabbos* was different. It was enhanced in both taste and aroma.

9. *Shabbos* 36b.

10. This means sunset, even if one begins *Shabbos* earlier. (*Minchas Shlomo* 2:34:9).

11. *Mishnah Berurah* 253:38. One should seek Rabbinic guidance before relying on this leniency. The *Chazon Ish* (37:6) writes that the measurement of a half or a third is quantitative and not qualitative. Half cooked means half the time it takes to become fully cooked, starting from after the food reaches *yad soledes bo* (120°F). Others say that the food must always be at least minimally edible. (See *Kaf HaChaim* 253:28.)

12. An additional *heter* is that of *k'deira chayasa*, cooking raw food. Its implementation has further limitations which will not be discussed in this article.

13. *Iggros Moshe* O.C. 1:93.

14. This is unlike opening a refrigerator, where operating the motor is assumed to be a Rabbinic prohibition. See *Iggros Moshe* IV:74:Bishul #28.

15. This is a *grama* on a *melacha sh'einah tzricha lagufah*. See *Orchos Shabbos* III:29:19 quoting *Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l*, who permitted *grama* on a *melacha d'oraisa* for a *davar she'eino miskaven*, even *psik reisha*.

16. *Shulchan Aruch* 254:4, *Mishnah Berurah* 318:114.

17. No matter the device one chooses, one should be aware that making it *garuf v'katum* demonstrates a lack of further interest in adjusting the temperature. Therefore, once the coverings are in place, even before *Shabbos* begins, the temperature should no longer be raised. *Shemiras Shabbos*, chapter 1, note 54, 185.

18. See *Orchos Shabbos* Vol. 1, pp. 112-113, for a full discussion.



CHOLENT FAQs

I ENJOY SAMPLING THE CHOLENT ON A LONG WINTER FRIDAY NIGHT. WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR REMOVING SOME AND RETURNING THE POT TO THE FIRE?

One may not spoon out food from a pot that is still on the fire, even if the food is fully cooked.¹ Therefore, the pot must first be removed from the fire. Once this is done, replacing the pot involves the prohibition of *chazara*. In addition to the concern that one may adjust the temperature, according to many *Rishonim*, there is also a problem of *mechzi k'mevashail*, giving the appearance of actually cooking. Replacing the pot on a heat source is permitted when the following conditions are met:² **1)** The *cholent* is fully cooked,³ **2)** The food remains warm,⁴ **3)** The pot was initially removed with the intention of returning it to the fire, **4)** The pot is continually held and never released from the hand,⁵ and **5)** The fire is *garuf v'katum*, as discussed above.⁶

THE FIRE WENT OUT UNDER THE BLECH ON SHABBOS AND THE CHOLENT IS BECOMING COLD. WHAT CAN BE DONE?

This scenario occurs occasionally when a gas stove is left on a low setting, or when an electric device does not automatically turn back on after a power interruption. Many *Poskim*⁷ permit transferring the pot to another flame, as long as: **1)** the second flame is *garuf v'katum*, and **2)** the *cholent* is fully cooked and still warm. For this purpose, it is enough for the food to remain sufficiently above ambient temperature for a 'warm' food, even if the temperature dropped below *yad soledos bo*. If the second fire is uncovered, one may cover it with a pot or a *blech* to render it *garuf v'katum*.⁸ If the flame has not gone out, but one detects that the *cholent* is not hot enough, one may slide it over to a position on the *blech* that is closer to the fire as long as it is fully cooked and still warm.

HOW CAN I SAVE A CHOLENT THAT IS DRYING OUT?

One may pour hot water from a kettle that was on the stove (but not from an insulated thermos) directly into *cholent*, provided that the heat source under the *cholent* pot is *garuf v'katum*.⁹ This may be done even if the temperature of the water dropped to below *yad soledos bo* (120°F), as long as the water is still hot enough to satisfy someone who is interested in a warm drink. *Poskim* recommend pouring the water gently to prevent the flow from stirring the contents in the pot.¹⁰

If the hot water is in an urn which cannot be moved, the pot of *cholent* may be carried over and held under the spigot.¹¹ Some water heating devices do not heat the water to the boiling point. Nonetheless, *Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l* permitted transferring this water to a pot of food, even if it will subsequently reach a hotter temperature.¹² When neither the *cholent* pot nor the urn is moveable, one may use a cup or ladle to scoop hot water from the urn and transfer it to the *cholent*. *Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach* even allowed dispensing hot water into a cup (*kli sheini*) to pour into the *cholent*. In either event, the cup or ladle must be clean and dry.¹³

MAY CHOLENT BE SERVED ON A PLATE CONTAINING LIQUID RESIDUE?

Often, cold liquids from dressings or other foods run onto the section of the plate where one wants to place hot *cholent*. This presents a problem since potatoes, a staple of most *cholents*, are classified as a *davar gush*, a food that retains its heat for a long duration of time even after being removed from the fire. Other items that are considered a *davar gush* are pieces of meat and dense clumps of rice, beans, barley, or noodles (like *kugel*). The *Mishnah Berurah*¹⁴ rules that a hot *davar gush*

(*yad soledos bo*) has the status of a *kli rishon* and the ability to cook, even when placed onto a cold plate (*kli sheini*). Cold liquids, even if they have been previously cooked, are subject to the *melacha* of *bishul* once they cool down and, therefore, one should avoid placing *cholent* onto cold liquids.¹⁵ If only a few drops of residual liquid remain on the plate, and that liquid was previously cooked at some point, one may be lenient. However, if the liquid was never cooked that area should be carefully dried before adding a hot *davar gush*.

MAY ONE ADD SALT OR OTHER SEASONINGS TO CHOLENT ON SHABBOS?

Regular table salt is commonly produced using a process that involves evaporation and drying. If the salt reached the temperature of *yad soledos bo* during its manufacture, the rule of *ein bishul achar bishul* (once an item has been cooked it is no longer subject to the *melacha* of *bishul*) permits one to add it to hot *cholent* that has been removed from the fire.¹⁶ One should consult with a rabbinical authority about how this applies to the salt we use today.¹⁷

Adding other spices, such as pepper, garlic, etc., is problematic since they are ground from the original plant material without other processing.¹⁸ Although spices are often dehydrated, they are never heated and remain raw.¹⁹ Therefore, spices should not be added to *cholent* that contains a hot *davar gush*, even after the *cholent* is transferred to a serving dish or a plate. *Rav Moshe Feinstein*²⁰ says that ketchup or other sauces that were previously cooked may be poured even onto a *davar gush*. If there is no *davar gush*, spices may be added once the *cholent* is in a *kli sheini*, such as a plate or serving bowl.²¹

WHAT IS THE BRACHA ON CHOLENT?

In recent years, *cholent* consumption has expanded beyond the traditional *Shabbos* lunch menu and it is regularly served at *kiddushim*, as a snack on winter Friday nights, or even during the week. Therefore, it is necessary to determine the proper *brocha* when *cholent* is not eaten as part of a bread meal.

The general rule is that a mixture containing one of the five grains (BROWS – barley, rye, oats, wheat, spelt) in cooked form is *mezonos*, even if the grain is only a minority ingredient.²² Barley is a common ingredient in *cholent* and, therefore, a *mezonos* will cover the entire concoction. Whether or not large pieces of potato or meat require a separate *brocha* depends upon how the *cholent* is eaten. If the chunks are cut into small enough pieces so that most forkfuls contain pieces of barley along with the other food items, the *brocha* will still be *mezonos*, even if a piece of potato or meat is occasionally eaten alone in the course of a serving.²³ When the pieces of potato or meat are large enough so that they are consumed individually without any grains, they require their own *brachos* both before and after consumption.²⁴ If a *k'zayis* of barley²⁵ is eaten within *k'dei achilas p'ras* (4 minutes), an *al hamichya* is recited.²⁶

In the absence of one of the five grains, the majority element in the mixture determines the *brocha*. *Cholent* made from rice, which is not one of the five grains, is a *mezonos* if the rice comprises a majority (51%) of the mixture. If no single ingredient is a majority, then multiple *brochos* are recited; first a *mezonos* on the rice, and then *ho'adama* on the beans, onions or potatoes, followed by a *shehakol* on the meat.²⁷

The *Talmud*²⁸ extols the virtue of delighting in the *Shabbos*, and describes the phenomenal reward that is bestowed upon someone who does so. Through proper adherence to *halacha*, our *cholent* can be a vehicle to enhance *Shabbos*, with both body and soul.

Enjoy!

1. *Kol Bo* (cited by *Beis Yosef* 253:4) prohibits *meigis*, stirring a pot while on the fire, even if the food is fully cooked. Taking food out from the pot is similar to stirring. See *Shulchan Aruch* 318:18.
2. *Orach Chaim* 253.
3. The status of a *cholent* containing meat or chicken bones, where the *cholent* itself is fully cooked but not the bones, has been widely debated, most notably in an exchange of *teshuvos* between *Rav Moshe Feinstein* and *Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach*. The prevalent consensus is to permit *chazara* in this instance.
4. See *Mishnah Berurah* (M.B.) 253:68 citing *Magen Avraham*, that this requirement is even for dry food.
5. *Iggros Moshe* O.C. IV:74:Bishul #33 holds that as long as one hand is holding the pot, the pot may rest on the counter or table. *Rav Elyashiv shlit'a* holds that a portion of the pot must remain elevated. (*Shvus Yitzchok* 14:2)
6. B'dieved, if someone removed the *cholent* from the fire without intention to return it and then changed his mind, he may still replace the pot if it was never released from his hand. Alternately, if one inadvertently put it down, he may replace it as long as he always intended to do so. See M.B. 253:56. The *Chazon Ish* (37:12) is lenient, even in the absence of both conditions.
7. *Iggros Moshe* IV:74:Bishul #38, *Shemiras Shabbos* chap. 1, note 69.
8. *Iggros Moshe* IV:74:Bishul #29. This would be prohibited if the metal became red hot, which is also a form of *bishul*. (*Rambam Hilchos Shabbos* 9:6) There is no problem with changing the shape of a flame.
9. See *Shulchan Aruch* 253:4 and M.B. *Orchos Shabbos* 1:2:58.
10. *Shemiras Shabbos* 1:16. This is a concern of *meigis*, see above note #1.
11. To avoid making the urn *fleishig*, the *cholent* pot should be held far enough away so hot steam emanating from it does not reach the spigot.
12. *Iggros Moshe* O.C. IV:74:Bishul #1. *Orchos Shabbos* 1:1:17 cites others who are *machmir* about this.
13. *Shemiras Shabbos* 1:16.
14. 318:65.

15. *Iggros Moshe* O.C. 1:93.

16. See M.B. 318:64,71.

17. To save energy, companies cook the salt brine in vacuum conditions causing the water to boil out before reaching the temperature of *yad soledos bo*. Nevertheless, *Poskim* offer other reasons to be lenient in accordance with the *Rama* (318:9), that not placing raw salt in a pot off the fire is just a *chumra*. Some salts are mined directly from the ground. They should be treated as spices, discussed below.

18. See *Kashrus Kurrents*, *Ta'am Tov B'Tuv Ta'am: A Flavorful Blend of Kashrus and Spices*, by Rabbi Tzvi Rosen.

19. See *Iggros Moshe* O.C. II:85.

20. *Iggros Moshe* O.C. IV:74:Bishul #5.

21. *Shemiras Shabbos*, chapter 1, note 152 cites *Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach* as not allowing the finely ground spices that are common today to be placed in a *kli sheini*. Other *Poskim* challenge his assertion.

22. *Orach Chaim* 208:2. The exception to this rule is when the grain is added solely as a thickening agent.

23. *Aruch HaShulchan* 212:2. The *Chayei Odom* (51:13, 54:9) holds that any food item in a mixture that is independently discernible requires its own *brocha*. The M.B. (B.H. beg. of 212), citing other *Poskim*, does not follow this ruling. He advises those who wish to fulfill all opinions to mash the larger items so they will be eaten together with the *mezonos* foods. See also *Teshuvos v'Hanhagos* (II:146).

24. *Al haMichaya* does not cover *ho'adama* or *shehakol* foods (*Shulchan Aruch* 208:2).

25. The volume of 1.1 fluid ounces. According to *Rav Chaim Na'ah*, a *k'zayis* is the volume of 27 cc; according to the *Chazon Ish* it is 45 cc.

26. M.B. 208:48. Because this is difficult to estimate, practically speaking, it is best to eat other foods requiring an *al hamichya* and *borei nefashos* and their *brocha acharonas* will cover the *cholent*, as well.

27. This is the *psak* of *Rav Heinemann*. *V'zos Habracha*, p. 94, cites an opinion that all the *ho'adama* ingredients can combine together to constitute a majority.

28. *Shabbos* 118b.



Understanding Batel B'shishim

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3



intentionally, he, his family, and the person for whom he is *mevatel* it may not eat it.²⁴ However, if a gentile company adds a non-kosher ingredient and the non-kosher ingredient is *batel*, a kosher consumer may buy this product as there is no prohibition of “*ain mevatin*” for the gentile.²⁵ This is only true if it was not done explicitly for *Yidden*.

5 Nikker – If the non-kosher item is detectable (e.g. one can see and notice a small non-kosher piece of meat in vegetable soup), one may not eat the food until the non-kosher item is removed. This is true, even if the non-kosher item is less than one-sixtieth.²⁶

6 Chometz on Pesach – If *chometz* was mixed into Kosher for *Pesach* food on *Pesach*, the food is considered *chometz* even if the kosher for *Pesach* food is 60 times the non-kosher for *Pesach* food.²⁷

7 Davar she'bminyan – If something is usually sold individually, it does not become *batel*.²⁸ For example, pomegranates are a *davar she'bminyan* since they are sold in supermarkets only by the piece, not by weight or by the dozen.²⁹

8 Chaticha Re'uya L'hischabed – A prominent piece of food, such as a piece of chicken (e.g. a top or bottom), fit to be prepared (e.g. ready to be baked) for a guest is “important.” If a non-kosher piece of this chicken became mixed with many kosher pieces, all of the pieces would be *assur* (forbidden).³⁰

9 Avoda Zara – An idol, or anything used in the service of idolatry including wine,³¹ is not *batel*.³²

10 Chazusa – According to some opinions, something that is not kosher that adds color to a food is not *batel b'shishim*. An example of this is carmine, derived from an insect. Carmine used at even less than one-sixtieth would render the product not kosher.³³ Other opinions disagree.³⁴ One should consult a *Rav*.

11 Sakana – There is a general principal that “*chamira sakanta may'issura*,” which means even if it is *batel* we are stricter with something that may be dangerous (even when diluted) than with something prohibited by *halacha*.³⁵ An example of this is something poisonous that became diluted. It should be noted that although one may not eat fish and meat together due to *sakana*,³⁶ one can be lenient if the ratio of fish to meat is less than one-sixtieth.³⁷

III. BITUL AT PERCENTAGES OTHER THAN SHISHIM

Various items are *batel* at ratios other than one-sixtieth. Examples include the following:

1 Pieces vs. Mixtures – When non-kosher food is mixed into kosher, the kosher food must generally be 60 times the non-kosher in order to nullify the non-kosher. When “pieces” of food are mixed up and have not been heated, soaked³⁸ or salted together, the following *halacha* applies: If it is “*min b'mino*” (i.e. they have a similar taste), then *min hadin* only “*rov*” (the majority is permissible) is required.³⁹ This would occur if the kosher and non-kosher pieces are identical. For example, if one piece of meat from an *unshchted* animal was mixed with two pieces of kosher meat, the non-kosher meat is “*batel b'rov*” – nullified by majority. In this case, the pieces may not be cooked

together, and the *minhag* is to still discard one piece.⁴⁰

2 Nosain Taam L'fgam – If something not kosher has an unpleasant taste, and is prepared together with kosher food, it is *batel b'rov* and does not require *shishim*. For example, if an insect was cooked in a kosher product and was then removed, the food is kosher even if the food was not 60 times the volume of the insect, since the insect taste is considered to be “*pagum*.”⁴¹ Furthermore, in general if one inadvertently cooks in a non-kosher pot that is not a *ben yomo* (i.e. it has not been used in 24 hours), the taste from the pot is *pogum* and *batel* in the cooked product.⁴²

3 There are **certain items that have a more lenient level** of prohibition that *Chazal* said are *batel b'rov* if they were inadvertently mixed. Examples include the following:

- *Kitniyos* (legumes) prohibited on *Pesach* are *batel b'rov*.⁴³
- Meat that was not salted (or soaked) for three days cannot be cooked. It may only be roasted. If such a piece of meat was salted after three days, and was then mixed with two pieces that were salted within three days of the *shechita* or washing, they may be cooked as the unsalted piece is *batel b'rov*; sixty is not required.⁴⁴

4 Challah – If someone was *mafrish challah*, and the piece of *challah* fell back into the regular dough, the *challah* would not be *batel* even if there was 60 times more regular dough.⁴⁵ One needs 100 times more regular dough than the piece of *challah*.⁴⁶

IV. AVIDI L'TAAMA – FLAVORS

If a non-kosher ingredient is “*avidi l'taama*”, added as a flavoring agent, it will prohibit the mixture even if the *issur* (prohibited item) is less than one-sixtieth of the mixture.⁴⁷ The reason for this is because this non-kosher item has the ability to impart “*ta'am*” (flavor), even in a mixture well below one-sixtieth.⁴⁸ An example of this is civet absolute, which is derived from the secretions of a civet, a non-kosher cat-like species. This flavor component has a sweet animal-like odor and is added at parts per million to flavors used in beverages, ice cream, candy and baked goods.

V. CONCLUSION

It is quite evident that the *Torah* recognizes that people make mistakes. In addition to kitchen mix-ups discussed in *Yoreh De'ah*, every other section of the *Shulchan Aruch* devotes *simanim* to discussions of the *halachos* of mistakes. This includes mistakes in *davening*,⁴⁹ a mistake made by a *sofer*,⁵⁰ or a mistake made by a *dayan*.⁵¹

The important lesson is to understand that if the *Torah* and *Chazal* have set a course of direction for those who make errors, then we too must have patience with regard to all of us who make mistakes – our spouses, our family, our friends, our neighbors, and yes even ourselves. We should never feel depressed about our own shortcomings, despite the fact that we at times make mistakes. These *halachos* are a constant reminder that we are only human. Our goal is to recognize these errors and take the proper steps to correct them in the way the *Torah* prescribes.

24. Y.D. 99:5 and Taz 98:10. See also *Reb Akiva Eiger*. In regards to selling it, see *Rama & Taz* 99:12.

25. See *Darchei Teshuva* 108:20. This is why a tablet is considered kosher even if it contains magnesium stearate, a possible non-kosher ingredient usually mixed into the product at less than one-sixtieth. As previously indicated, Star-K will only certify products that are 100% kosher.

26. *Chachmas Adam* 51:3.

27. O.C. 447:1. See also *Mishna Brura* (M.B.) 447:2. When *chometz* is mixed before *Pesach*, then the following *halachos* apply: If the mixture is fluid (known as “*lach b'lach*”), for example beer (*chometz*) mixed with wine or if the mixture is powdery (known as *kemach b'kemach*), the *chometz* is *batel* one in sixty. It may be consumed on *Pesach*. However, if there is a “solid” food item involved, and it is cooked together with *chometz* (e.g. one baked a piece of chicken with *chometz* soy sauce), then it will not remain *batel* on *Pesach* and may not be eaten, even if it was mixed before *Pesach* (see O.C. 447:4 and additional cases in M.B. 33). This is known as “*chozair v'nayor*.”

28. *Rama* Y.D. 110:1. See *Taz* 110:1 and *Shach* 110:9, who discuss cases where products are sold in differing amounts. Also see *Shulchan Aruch* Y.D. 110:1, who cites additional examples of items that are “*chashuv*” (important) and not *batel*.

29. Therefore, if a pomegranate that was *orlah* was mixed with many other regular pomegranates, one may not eat any of the pomegranates. Although *orlah* is generally *batel* in 200, in this case of *davar she'bminyan*, it cannot become *batel*.

30. Y.D. 101:1 and *Rama* 101:3.

31. This is known as *yayin nesech*. For conditions and details, see Y.D. 134. Note that the *halachos* of wine that is prepared or touched by an *akum* (*stam yaynam*) are different.

32. Y.D. 140:1. The *Shach* 140:1 notes that decorative items used to beautify or enhance the idol are also not *batel*.

33. See *Shach* Y.D. 102:5.

34. See M.B. 513:9 for the different opinions.

35. The *Taz* Y.D. 116:2 discusses this *halacha* in detail.

36. Y.D. 116:2.

37. *Nekudas Hakeseif* 116. Nowadays, such a mixture is certainly permissible - see *Pischei Teshuva* 116:3 for a full explanation.

38. For 24 hours.

39. Y.D. 109:1.

40. The *Rama* notes that by “*min b'shaino mino*” (pieces are different), the kosher must be 60 times the non-kosher. For an example of this case, see *Shach* 109:9. This *Shach* also discusses whether this also applies by an *issur d'rabbanan*. See also *Shach* 110 - *Dinei Sfeik Sfeika* 22.

41. See *Taz* Y.D. 104:6 and *Pri Megadim* *Sifsei Daas* 107:7.

42. Y.D. 122:2. If the food in the pot was a *davar charif* (sharp), a *Rav* should be consulted as the *pogum* taste may not be *batel*.

43. M.B. 453:9.

44. Y.D. 69:14.

45. *Rama* Y.D. 323:1. It should be noted that there are other cases involving agricultural products that require more than *shishim* for *bitul* (e.g. *Teruma*) that are beyond the scope of this article.

46. If the dough is less than 100 times the amount of *challah*, although it is not *batel*, there is another way to permit the dough through *hataras nedarim*. Consult a *Rav*.

47. *Rama* Y.D. 98:8. See *Taz* 98:11.

48. It should be noted that *avidi l'taama* does not *assur* in the following cases: 1) A case where the flavor component is no longer detectable. For example, if a flavor component normally used at one part per million (ppm) is inadvertently added to a product at one part per billion (i.e. and it is no longer detectable), the product is kosher. 2) *Zeh v'zeh gorem* – If a kosher component gives off a basically identical taste, we say “this (*heter*) and this (*issur*) make up the taste,” and in certain cases the finished product would still be kosher. See *Magen Avraham Orach Chaim* 318:31 and *Taz* 318:15. A *shaila* should be asked. 3) If something that is intrinsically kosher that has a powerful taste is mixed with something non-kosher that does not have a strong taste, the newly formed *avidi l'taama* compound will be *batel b'shishim* if it falls into something else. See Y.D. 105:14. For example, salt is *avidi l'taama*. If it absorbed blood (which is non-kosher), and then the salt fell into food, it will still be *batel b'shishim* since the blood which is forbidden (and not *avidi l'taama*) is *batel b'shishim*. Similarly, if a kosher *avidi l'taama* item was heated in a non-kosher pot, and then placed in a pot of kosher food, it will be *batel b'shishim*.

49. *Orach Chaim* 268.

50. *Even Ha'ezer* 151.

51. *Choshen Mishpat* 25.



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STAR-K's Kashrus Training Program will be held from Monday July 25, 2011 through Thursday, July 28, 2011. This intensive seminar, held at STAR-K's offices in Baltimore, Maryland, is limited to 25 students -- *rabbonim*, *kollel* fellows, and others serving in *klei kodesh* -- who have studied *Yorah Deah*. In addition to lectures, audio-visual presentations and a hands-on practicum, several field trips are planned.

Applications are available online at www.star-k.org. For further information contact Rabbi Zvi Goldberg, (410) 484-4110, extension 219.

Women's Mashgicha Conference Planned for Fall 2011

STAR-K's first *Mashgicha* Enrichment Program, held in November, 2009, attracted veteran *mashgichos* from around the U.S. and as far away as Israel. It was so successful that STAR-K is planning its second all-women conference this coming fall. The two-day program will be held at its Baltimore headquarters and is open to a limited number of women who are currently employed as *mashgichos* worldwide. The curriculum will include *kashrus* procedures, insect checking, and visits to local food service establishments.

For further information on the Star-K Women's *Mashgicha* Conference, or to register, please email star-k@star-k.org or contact Rabbi Zvi Goldberg (410) 484-4110, extension 219.

Last Chance to make a Star-K Shidduch!

Six years ago, STAR-K undertook the goal of trying to solve the Baltimore singles situation, typical of many Orthodox communities throughout the U.S. Offering a cash incentive for a period of one year to anyone who successfully arranged a *shidduch* for a woman in Baltimore's Orthodox community, STAR-K hoped that its gift would act as a dual incentive: first, for professional *shadchanim* worldwide, in order to put Baltimore women on the top of their singles lists, and second for "would-be *shadchanim*" and acquaintances to keep Baltimore women in mind.

STAR-K has since renewed this *Shidduch* Incentive Program annually, raising the initial gift from \$2,000 to \$2,500. We are pleased to announce that this program has been a great success, as well as an inspiration for other cities to help their singles. To date (no pun intended!), STAR-K has paid out \$346,000 for a total of 143 matches. Regretfully, STAR-K will no longer be able to fund this program. However, all *shidduchim* made before *Purim* 5771 (March 20, 2011) will be honored.



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