

Making Tea on Shabbos  
Aryeh Lebowitz

**I. Introduction.** Many people have the practice of serving tea at the conclusion of the meals. Indeed, after eating a hearty שבת סעודה, sometimes tea is the perfect way to settle the stomach. The proper method of making tea on שבת has been debated amongst the פוסקים for the last 150 years. The issue can be somewhat complex because the making of tea can touch on three separate מלאכות of שבת - בורר, בישול, צובע, - שבת. Due to the complexity of the issue, confusion often reigns. We will therefore try to clearly outline all of the opinions regarding the permissible method with which to make tea on שבת and provide practical guidance in this matter.

**II. בישול.**

*A. Background information.* Before we discuss the possible problems of בישול when it comes to making tea, it is important to gain a basic working knowledge of the concepts of כלי שני and כלי ראשון.

Very often food is cooked without the direct use of a fire or standard source of heat. This may be accomplished by placing food in a vessel that was recently cooked on the fire and still retains some heat. The teach is that a כלי ראשון (pot, or contents of pot, that was heated directly by a source of heat) can cook anything as long as it retains its original heat. Once the food is transferred into a כלי שני (vessel that the contents of the כלי ראשון are poured into), even though it may remain extremely hot, it no longer has the capacity to cook. (Regarding whether the concepts of כלי ראשון - כלי שני make any scientific sense, see אור שמח הלכות שבת פ"ט ה"ב and תוספות מסכת שבת דף מ: ד"ה שמע מינה). Regarding the ability of food being poured from a כלי ראשון into a כלי שני (עירוי כלי ראשון) the debate whether it is similar to a כלי שני and unable to cook, similar to a כלי ראשון and capable of cooking, or it falls somewhere in between and is able to cook but not to the level of a כלי ראשון (see ד"ה אבל ור"ן שם). The שולחן ערוך סימן שי"ה (תוספות שבת דף מב: ד"ה אבל ור"ן שם) indicate clearly that עירוי כלי ראשון is able to cook, but only the outermost surface of the food.

Although we have mentioned above that the heat of a כלי שני is not able to cook, made certain exceptions to the rule. There are some foods that are considered to be capable of becoming cooked even with a minimum amount of heat intensity, and can be cooked in a כלי שני. These foods are referred to as קלי הבישול. There are two major issues regarding קלי הבישול which we must deal with because of their relevance to our discussion.

1. Since the גמרא does not give many examples of food items that are קלי הבישול, it is difficult to develop a standard for which types of foods would be included in the category of קלי הבישול. There are three basic approaches to this issue:

a. The רמב"ם quotes from the הלכה סימן שי"ה ד"ה וקוליים האיספנין that all thin, soft textured food should be considered to be קלי הבישול.

b. The חזון איש סימן נ"ב אות י"ה seems to indicate that unless a food is mentioned explicitly in the גמרא or שו"ע as being קלי הבישול we can assume it is not קלי הבישול.

c. The משנה ברורה סימן שי"ה ס"ק מ"ב writes that we consider every food to be קלי הבישול unless we the גמרא explicitly states otherwise. Most פוסקים agree with the opinion of the משנה ברורה.

2. When we say that קלי הבישול can be cooked even in a כלי שני does that mean that they can also be cooked in a כלי שלישי?

a. (אגרו"מ או"ח ח"ד סימן ע"ד אות ט"ו) writes that since הרב משה פיינשטיין never makes mention of a כלי שלישי we may assume that it is never able to cook anything, even קלי הבישול.

b. The ערוך השלחן סימן שי"ח אות כ"ו clearly indicates that a כלי שלישי has the same ability to cook as a כלי שני and may therefore cook קלי הבישול (The משנה ברורה סימן משנה ברורה סימן seems to agree with this opinion).

**B. Practical הלכה.** Whether or not one violates the prohibition of cooking when placing a tea bag in a cup of hot water that was poured from the urn depends upon the two issues discussed above. If one were to assume that we do not have to consider all foods to be קלי הבישול then it would seem clear that one may place a tea bag directly in to the cup of hot water that was filled from the urn. If one were to assume that everything is considered קלי הבישול then cooking tea leaves in a cup of hot water poured from the urn (כלי שני) would be prohibited. Whether or not one may pour the water in to a second cup before adding the tea bag would then be the subject of debate between ר' משה פיינשטיין (who would permit it) and the ערוך השלחן (who would forbid it). As a practical matter there are three opinions regarding the issue of בישול when it comes to tea.

1. The משנה ברורה סימן שי"ח ס"ק ל"ט writes that one may not cook tea even in a כלי שלישי. If one wants tea on שבת he should prepare tea essence (by using a small amount of water with many tea bags to create a very strong concentration of tea) prior to שבת and follow the procedure outlined below in part III of this essay.

2. הרב משה פיינשטיין זצ"ל considered tea to be קלי הבישול and would not allow a tea bag to be used in a כלי שני but did permit the use of a tea bag in a כלי שלישי (because he felt that a כלי שלישי is incapable of cooking even the קלי הבישול).

3. הרב נפש הרב עמוד ק"ע is cited in ספר נפש הרב יוסף דוב הלוי סלוויצ'יק זצ"ל (וכתב לי מו"ר הגרצ"ש דלא מיירי על הגר"ח זצ"ל אלא על הרב אליהו) as having said that although his grandfather was always careful to follow הלכה accurately, he would place a tea bag in a כלי שני (obviously assuming that tea is not considered to be קלי הבישול). The Rav, in fact, followed what he saw his grandfather do, and would make himself tea in a כלי שני (cup of hot water poured directly from the urn or kettle). (וכתב לי מו"ר שליט"א דגם הוא נהג כן מפעם לפעם)

4. The ערוך לנר ח"א סימן י"ז writes that if one poured hot water on the tea bag before שבת he may then make tea with an כלי ראשון because עירוי בישול אין בישול אחר בישול. This is a highly questionable leniency. When we say that עירוי כלי ראשון מבשל כדי קליפה there is a discussion in the poskim whether this means it cooks the כלי צרכו or it just cooks it a little bit. משנה ברורה בשער הציון clearly assumes that it only cooks it a little bit and any subsequent cooking will violate מדאורייתא בישול. The סימן שי"ח האו"ח סימן שו"ת מהר"ם שי"ק האו"ח סימן "לפע"ד פשוט דאין לסמוך על זה דאנו לא שמענו אלא דעירווי also writes explicitly that במשל אבל לא דעירווי במשל כל צרכו או דבמשל כמאב"ד חצי בישולו וא"כ כ"ז שלא נתבשל כל צרכו הא קי"ל בסימן שי"ח סעיף ד' דיש בישול אחר בישול אפילו ביבש"

**III. בורר.** According to some poskim (שו"ת מנחת יצחק ח"ד סימן צ"ט אות כ') when one lifts a tea bag out of the cup he is in violation of the מלאכה of בורר. This is true because they view removing the wet dripping tea bag from the cup as being tantamount to straining the dripping tea from the leaves inside the bag. Other poskim, however, do not consider this

(עיין שמירת שבת כהלכתה פ"ג הערה קע"א מהרה"ג רש"ז אויערבך זצ"ל ועיין בספר ל"ט מלאכות מלאכת בורר הערה 298) All agree that if the tea bag is removed with a spoon, there is certainly no problem of בורר. As a practical matter one should try to remove tea bags with a spoon, but if no spoon is available to him, he may remove the tea bag in the normal fashion. Even if one follows the opinion of the above mentioned משנה ברורה who requires you to make tea essence before שבת, this can still be an issue when one removes the bags from the tea essence. It is therefore recommended that one remove the bags prior to שבת.

**IV. צובע.** In general it is clear from the ש"כ סעיף י"ט that the prohibition of dyeing does not apply to food. This is true because dyeing was only done in the משכן for permanent use, but coloring foods is never for permanent use as one always intends to eat the food. However, some פוסקים question this exemption and maintain that one may not even color food (עיין שו"ת אבני נזר סימן קע"ג בשם התוספות רי"ד, ושער הציון סימן שי"ה אות ס"ה). If, however, one first places the coloring ingredient and then the clear ingredient all agree that there will be no violation of צובע. This is true because by employing this method one is merely diluting an existing color as opposed to changing a neutral color (כן כתב בשער הציון שם).

Based on this, if the tea essence was prepared before שבת and is still warm it is preferable to add the tea essence first and then pour the water into the glass. If, the tea essence is cold one should pour the water into a כלי שני and pour from the כלי שני into a third cup containing the tea essence.

If one is using a tea bag one should follow a similar method unless one is making the tea in a כלי שני (in accordance with the opinion of רב סלויצ'יק זצ"ל) in which case one should add the water to the כלי שני first, and then place the tea bag in the cup in order to avoid problems of בישול with עירווי כלי ראשון. The problems of בישול clearly take halachik precedence over the possible problem of צובע.

**V. Conclusion.** We have outlined the opinions of various poskim regarding all of the halachik questions that arise when making tea. We have become familiar with the issues involved. As with any halachik question, one should ask his local halachik authority for guidance in choosing an opinion to follow.

#### Comments of Mori V'rabi Harav Silver shlit'a

Re. tea on shabbos: 1) We know that kli sheni is not mevashel-Shabbos 40b. Besides the problem of kalei habishul, there should have been another problem in making tea in a kli sheini. Tos. Shabbos 39a dh kol quotes one opinion from the Ri that there is an issur derabanan of mecheyzi kemevashel in a kli sheini. Only in tavlin this does not apply as they are put there to add taste to the pot. This is quoted lehalacha by the MB

318,34. Those who are meikel to make tea in a kli sheni apparently are of the opinion that tea is also a tavlin. One could lechora argue and say where the whole drink is the tea, this is not considered tavlin. See the teshuva of Rav Moshe zt"l in the back of R. Eider on bishul 27,3 who talks on this topic. 2) Rav. Schachter shlita said in the name of the Rav zt"l that if the water poured from the kli rishon hits the side of the cup and then goes down onto the food- this is considered kli sheini and is muttar lechatchila. Obviously once the water and tea rises towards the top of the cup, this is not possible to do. 3) The major proof that one would not have to be choshesh that "everything" is kalei habishul is the fact that it is mefurash in the gemara 42a that one may put water in a kli sheni (quoted in OH318, 12 and in Shaar Hatzion 68) and lechora nothing is easier to cook than water. I believe I heard this proof from Rav Schachter shlita in the name of the Rav zt"l and it is lechora also there in the Chazon Ish you quoted 352,18. 4) You write that it seems from the MB 318,39 that it is also assur in a kli shlishi. The MB writes in 318,47 that one may put bread which some rishonim suspect is kalei habbishul in a kli shlishi. One could say that this is not a proof as in bread it is already baked and bishul achar afiya itself is a machlokes rishonim and that is why one can be meikil in a kli shlishi. However the Chazon Ish assumes (in the last paragraph in siman 52) that this applies to onions as well.

Bli neder, I will

continue later (time to

daven shacharis),

Ahron Silver

Dear Aryeh,

Re. borer: If one has no spoon, then one (when removing the teabag) should take it out and not hold it over the tea but put it somewhere else right away as the borer problem is letting the tea droplets drip out of the bag into the tea.

Re. Tzoveah: The Beis Yosef quotes the Shiblei Haleket in the name of the Yeraim that the reason that there is no tzvia in food is that ain derech tvia beochlin. I am not sure what this means. It lechora can't mean it is a shinui as then it should be ossur midrabanan as all kilachar yad. Rashi 39a dh deshari says that it is mutar to cook in the sun as ein derech bishlo becach. Rav Schachter shlita said in the name of the Rav zt'l that nowadays when we have solar heated water, to hear water in the sun is ossur deoreosa. However, see the Shemiras Shabbos 1, footnote 127 not like this and see Igros Moshe OH vol.3 siman 52 why. It could be that some variance of that is the case by ztovea in food-that it is not like the tzvia in the mishkan. You wrote that the reason is because it is not permanent. If this is so, then why is it ossur for a lady to color her face on shabbos see OH 303,25. The MB 79 there writes it is ossur only medrabanan, but still why acc. to the mechaber is it ossur there midrabanan and not by food? It could be that the lady really would like it to be permanent and that is why it is more chomur there. Also why in OH 320,20 is it more chamur to wipe one's hands on the mapa etc. as there he will clean it later after shabbos? This is relavent to another problem. The MB 320,56 writes that when one colors

water for non food purposes, it might be ossur min haTorah. People have things in their toilets that color and add fragrance to the water. (Molid reach is ossur in water-see OH 511,4 in the Rama and MB 28.) This is also only temporary (especially in urinals where it is washed out right away). See regarding this- Shemiras Shabbos 23,14 and footnote 44, 3 footnote 54 (where agav he says the heter to add the water to the color is just in conjunction with ein tzvia beochlin, but not by itself), Shut. Minchas Shlomo vol. 2 siman 14 (and the footnote there). I have seen quoted on this also the Ztitz Eliezer vol. 14 siman 47 and the Shit. Az Nidbiru vol. 12 siman 13 and others on this.

I read your article on kiddush quickly. One short point-One has to drink a malei lugma and not a rov reviiis. Rov reviiis is just the shiur for an adam beinoni see MB 271,68. Only by arba kosos is there an opinion that one need rov kos. (However the beur halacha there does entertain your opinion dh vehoo.) Also see Beur Halacha 572 dh veyishteh, abd the Brisker Rav on the Rambam Chametz Umatza 7,9dh vehanireh),