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Introduction to *Shehiya*¹

With the start of the third *perek* we were introduced to issues relating to the prohibition of *bishul* – cooking on *Shabbat*. The first *Mishnah* discussed two concepts that relate to this prohibition – *shehiya* and *chazara*. *Shehiya* relates to leaving a pot on the stove on *erev Shabbat* while *chazara* relates to returning a pot onto its heat source on *Shabbat* after it has been removed. Both issues are quite involved and this article attempt to provide an introduction to *shehiya*. *Chazara* is a separate issue with its own detail and no conclusions should be drawn from this discussion about *shehiya* to *chazara*. Also this article should be treated only as an introduction and one should consult their *Rabbi* before drawing any practical conclusion from this article.

The underlying concern with *shehiya* is not that the food is being cook on *Shabbat*. The first *perek* revealed the opinion of *Beit Hillel* that holds that there is no “*shvitat keilim*” on *Shabbat*. In other words, in general, one is not concerned if a *melacha* is being performed in one’s utensils without human assistance. The concern with *shehiya* is rather that if one sees their pot on the fire and the food is a little underdone, one may be tempted to ‘stoke the coals’ or in modern terms, turn up the heat, which equates to one of the *melachot*.

The first *Mishnah* (3:1) contains three statements:

1. If a stove were heated with straw or rakings, they may place on it cooked food; but if with peat or wood, one may not place it on until he has raked [the coals] out or covered [the coals] with ash.
2. *Beit Shammai* says, hot water but not cooked food, while *Beit Hillel* says also cooked food.
3. *Beit Shammai* says, they may remove but not put back, while *Beit Hillel* says they may also put back.

In the *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 36b) a discussion ensues as to how these three statements relate to each other. The result of this discussion has bearing on another debate regarding *shehiya*. Another *beraitah* is quoted in which *Chananya* maintains that once something is cooked to the level of *ma’achal ben drusai*² it can even be left on a stove that has not been raked

or covered with ashes. The *Chachamim* however argue that one can only leave a pot on a stove that has not been raked or cover with ash if it is fully cooked and leaving it on the stove would degrade the quality of the food. The *Gemara* therefore asks whether the first statement relates to *shehiya* which would be consistent with the opinion of the *Chachamim* or whether it relates to *chazara* implying *shehiya* is permissible even on a stove that is not raked?

After lengthy discussion the matter of how we rule was not resolved. The *Rishonim* continued this debate with *Rashi* (37b) and *Tosfot* (38a) ruling like *Chananya* while the *Rif* and the *Rambam* (*Shabbat* 3:4) ruled like the *Chachamim*. The *Shulchan Aruch* brings both opinions, bringing the *Chachamim*’s first and *Chananya*’s as “*yesh omrim*” implying that he rules like the *Chachamim*. Nevertheless the *Rama* holds that we are lenient like *Chananya*’s opinion. That said, the *Biur Halacha* writes that ordinarily one should ensure that the food is fully cooked and removed from the fire before *Shabbat*.

There are two special cases that have bearing on this issue. The first is the electric platter, otherwise known as the “*Shabbat platter*”. Some *Achronim* have ruled that since the electric platter does not contain any means of changing the level of heat, there is no longer any concern that one will transgress the prohibition of increasing the flame on *Shabbat*. Consequently, one could leave anything on the platter on *erev Shabbat* (*Yebiya Omer, Har Tzvi*). Nevertheless the *Shmirat Shabbat Kehilchata* (p 27) rules that one should ensure that food is fully cooked and only place on a covered fire. The second is the use of a covering or *blech* on a stovetop fire. Once again, some *Achronim* maintain that once the fire is covered, it is similar to that case in the *mishnah* when the stove is raked or covered with ash (*Yebiya Omer*). Nevertheless the *Shmirat Shabbat Kehilchata* (p 27) rules that the food should still be fully cooked even prior to placing it on a *blech*. The *Igrot Moshe* (93) adds that one should still cover the dials and switches to prevent one from increasing or decreasing the flame.

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¹ All the detail in this article was taken from the *Mishnah Berurah* (253) and *Yesodei Halacha* (9).

² There is a debate amongst the *Rishonim* as to the definition of *ma’achal ben drusai*. *Rashi* (*Shabbat* 20a) maintains it is one third

cooked, while the *Rambam* (*Hilchot Shabbat* 9:5) maintains it is one half cooked. The *Shulchan Aruch* (254:2) appears to rule like the *Rambam*. Nevertheless the *Mishnah Brurah* (253:38) rules that in pressing circumstances one can rely on *Rashi*’s opinion.

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Revision Questions

שבת א': י' – ג': ה'

- What restriction does the *Mishnah* place on cooking meat, onion and egg on *erev Shabbat*? (א': י')
- One is allowed to place dough in the oven on *erev Shabbat* provided that it has reached which stage before *Shabbat*? (א': י')
- Which case is an exception to the rule described in the first question? (א'י"א)
- What is the difference between the restrictions placed on lighting his own fire on *erev Shabbat* and the lighting of the *Beit Ha'Moked* on *erev Shabbat*? (א'י"א)
- The first *Mishnah* in the second *perek* lists things with which one is not allowed to use as *Shabbat* candles (either as wicks or as fuel). What is the reason why these things are excluded? (ב': א')
- Can *Shemen Sreifa* be used for *Shabbat* candles on *Yom Tov*? (ב': ב')
- Why does *R' Yishmael* prohibit the use of *Itran* for *Shabbat* candles? (ב': ב')
- The *Chachamim* allow all oils to be used for *Shabbat* candles, *R' Tarfon* only allows one – which is it? (ב': ב')
- Which is the only substance that comes from a tree that can be used as wicks in *Shabbat* candles? (ב': ג')
- For which other law is this substance an exception? (ב': ג')
- The *Chachamim* and *R' Yehuda* argue about the validity of two contraptions as use for *Shabbat* candles – describe them. (ב': ד')
- For what four reasons can one put out candles on *Shabbat*? (ב': ה')
- Which three *mitzvot* are women entrusted with? (ב': ו')
- Which three things must a person check have been completed prior to *Shabbat*? (ב': ז')
- Which three things does the *Mishnah* list as being prohibited during *bein ha'shmashot* and which three things are permissible? (ב': ז')
- Under what conditions can one leave food on the stove as *Shabbat* come in? (ג': א')
- With respect to the previous question, *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* argue on two point – what are they? (ג': א')
- What is a *tanur* and what is a *kofach* and how do they differ with respect to the previously described case? (ג': ב')
- Explain the debate regarding whether one can cook an egg in a utensil that has been left in the sun. (ג': ג')
- What was the innovation implemented by the people of *Teveria* and what was the *Chachamim's* reaction? (ג': ד')
- Can one put cold water into a container that has recently been emptied of it boiling hot water? (ג': ה')

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11 th September ז' אלול	12 th September ח' אלול	13 th September ט' אלול	14 th September י' אלול	15 th September יא' אלול	16 th September יב' אלול	17 th September יג' אלול
Shabbat 3:6 – 4:1	Shabbat 4:2 – 5:1	Shabbat 5: 2-3	Shabbat 5:4 – 6:1	Shabbat 6: 2-3	Shabbat 6: 4-5	Shabbat 6: 6-7

