

בס"ד



לש

May one pour water over flour without mixing? Is it permissible to wash one's hands over sand or dirt?

### I) Defining the *Melakha*

The *melakha* of *lash* (kneading; the process is known as *lisha*) pertains to an action that has an opposite objective to that of the *melakha* of *tochen* (grinding), as well as the *melakhot* of *dash* (threshing), *zoreh* (winnowing), *borer* (selecting) and *merakked* (sifting). The other *melakhot* listed here are performed in order to **separate substances**. *Dash*, *zoreh*, *borer* and *merakked* separate between the wheat (or the flour) and various types of refuse, while *tochen* reduces the wheat kernels to grains of flour. ***Lisha*, on the other hand, is a binding *melakha*.** In the process of kneading, one **fuses together separate, tiny parts and turns them into one unit**. (Note that the definition of the *melakha* is a subject of debate as we shall see below.)

The *melakha* of *lash* is not limited to foods, e.g., the preparation of dough from flour and water; rather, it applies to other substances as well — for example, **kneading water and dirt** is forbidden by the Torah, as a subcategory of *lash* (**Rambam 8:16**, according to the **Gemara**, 18a).

It is not only *lisha* per se that is banned by the Torah; **rolling the dough** (with a rolling pin) is also forbidden by Torah law, since it is part of the greater process of the *melakha*. (**Yerushalmi 7:2**).

*bar gibbul* (kneadable),  
*belila ava* (a thick mixture)  
*belila rakka* (literally, a soft mixture, i.e., a thin one).

Does *lisha* apply to that which is not *bar gibbul*? What is the difference between *belila ava* and *belila rakka*, practically and halakhically? What is prohibited by Torah law, what is prohibited by rabbinic law, and what is permissible?

### II) Mixing Flour and Water Without Kneading

**Shabbat 155b:**

If one puts in the flour and another puts in the water, the latter is liable, according to Rabbi. Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda says: "One is not liable without kneading."

### The Root of the Argument

- a) **Eglei Tal** - According to **Rabbi**, the essence of the *melakha* is the very **blending** of two different substances, while according to **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda**, the essence of the *melakha* is the fact that two substances **stick to each other and agglomerate**.
- b) According to all views, the essence of the *melakha* of *lash* is that the two substances **adhere and form one mass**, but according to **Rabbi**, one may be liable for **any significant act** which hastens this result, even if it has not yet been achieved. This principle emerges from the *melakha* of *bishul* (cooking), in which one may be liable for acts of partial cooking (anything above the minimal level of edibility). On the other hand, according to **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda**, one may be liable only for an action which brings about **the ultimate result** of a single mass.

### Halakhic Ruling

The **Rif** (67b), the **Rambam** (21:34) and the **Rosh** (24:3) rule in accordance with the view of **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda** (since the anonymous mishna on 155b follows his view), that there is a liability **only for producing dough**.

On the other hand, the **Yere'im** (Ch. 274, 133b), the **Teruma** (Ch. 220), the **Semag** (Prohibition 65, *lash*) and the **Semak** (Ch. 280) rule in accordance with the view of **Rabbi** (because of the general Talmudic principle that the halakha follows Rabbi Yehuda Ha-nasi when he has one opponent), so that one is liable **for the very act of putting water into flour**.

The **Shulchan Arukh** (321:16, 324:3) cites the lenient view (that of Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda) without any comment, and after that he introduces the stringent view (that of Rabbi) with the words "There are those who say." = suggesting that the *Shulchan Arukh* rules leniently, **that there is no Torah prohibition in putting water into flour without kneading it**. And indeed this is the ruling of the **Maamar Mordekhai** (321:13), **Rav Ovadya Yosef** (*Livyat Chen* 67) and the **Menuchat Ahava** (Vol. II, Ch. 9, end n. 9).

On the other hand, the **Rema** (321:16) rules in accordance with the view of Rabbi, that **putting water into flour is forbidden by the Torah**. The **Ben Ish Chai** (Year 2, Mishpatim 18) indicates that Sefardim must also rule stringently in accordance with this view, and this is the ruling of the **Kaf Hachayim** (324:14) and the view of **Rav Mordekhai Eliyahu**.

We should note that **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda**, who believes that there is no Torah prohibition of pouring water on flour, would concede that there is a **rabbinic prohibition**, because he says, "One is **not liable** without kneading" — but he does not say that it is permissible. This is noted by the **Ritva** (155b) and the **Me'iri** (18a) and cited by the **Beit Yosef** (Ch. 324, s.v. *Aval*).

Thus, putting water into flour without *lisha* is forbidden for both Ashkenazim and Sefardim; however, while for Ashkenazim it is a Torah

prohibition, for Sefardim it appears that it is prohibited rabbinically.

### III) Pouring Water on Sand or Dirt

#### CHILDREN IN THE SANDBOX

Children are allowed to play in a sandbox on Shabbat because it is designed for play and it is therefore not *muktzeh* (308:38). However, they are not allowed to play with sand on the beach or with dirt at a construction site, etc. because it is *muktzeh* on Shabbat, in the classic sense — i.e., it cannot be used because it lacks a recognized Shabbat use (**Mishna Berura** *ibid.* 144).

As we have seen, there is a prohibition (whether Torah-based or rabbinic in nature) to pour water on flour, and the same applies to sand. Therefore, while children are allowed to play in a sandbox, **it is forbidden for them to pour water over it**, even if they do not actively knead it by hand.

#### WASHING HANDS OR URINATING OVER SAND OR DIRT

This issue comes up frequently for people on hikes, in the army, or eating in the *sukka* — may one **wash one's hands on the "floor" when it is dirt or sand?** Watering the ground may fall under the *melakhot* of plowing or sowing at times, but when the ground in question has nothing planted in it and is not designated for cultivation, these *melakhot* are not a concern. However, one must investigate if there is a reason to prohibit this act because of *lash*. As we have seen, pouring water on sand (just like pouring it on flour) is forbidden according to everyone: according to Rabbi, by Torah law; and according to Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda, by rabbinical law.

This question also arises in situations when one must urinate in the field. The **Yere'im** (Ch. 274, 133b) indicates that one may not urinate anywhere where there may be a problem of *lisha* (i.e., where the ground is not hard). However, the *Acharonim* debate this, as the **Mishna Berura** cites (321:57):

The **Magen Avraham** writes, "It appears to me that it is forbidden to urinate upon mud, because of kneading...The same would apply to loose dirt and sand. While it is true that one has no intention of *lisha*, it is an inevitable result. As for a spittoon or a basin sitting on fine or coarse sand, it requires further study if this should be permitted or prohibited, because it might be an inevitable result which one has no interest in [which is sometimes allowed].

However, I have found that in the book **Beit Meir** that he allows it for this reason, in a case of need, to urinate even upon mud. It appears that one may rely on this [lenient view] when the mud does not belong to the one urinating, for in such a case one certainly has no interest in its *lisha*."

Thus, the **Magen Avraham** forbids urinating on mud because of *lisha*, and the **Mishna Berura** adds that according to this one may not urinate on loose dirt or sand. On the other hand, the **Beit Meir** allows this because the

person does not intend to perform *lisha*, and the halakha essentially follows Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda, who holds that pouring water on mud and the like is only prohibited rabbinically. Thus, the case is one of an undesired, inevitable result of a rabbinical prohibition, which is allowed in a case of need.

The **Mishna Berura** rules that one may rely on the **Beit Meir** in a case of need **as long as the dirt is someone else's**, because then we say that the one urinating certainly does not "desire" to change the consistency of another's dirt.

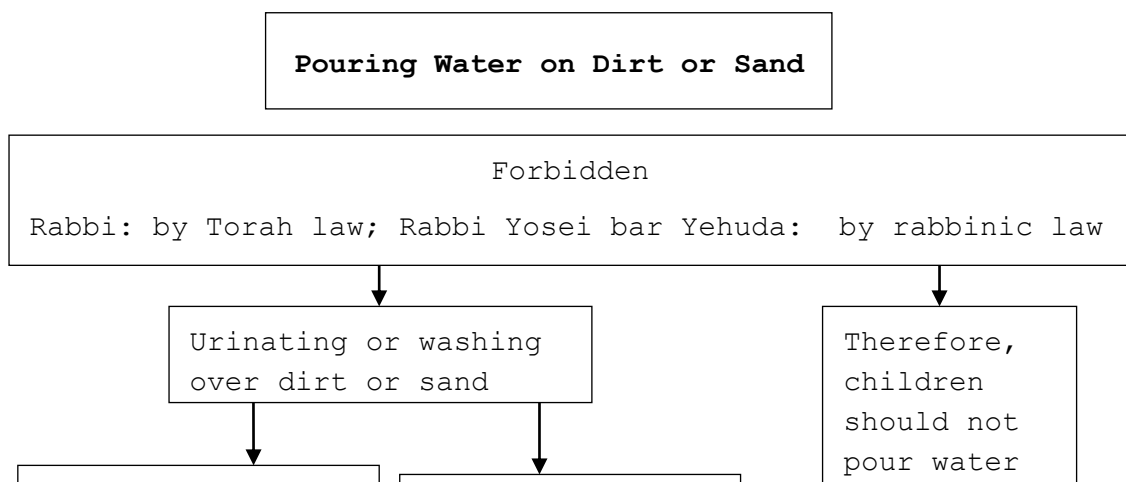
Therefore, **one should be careful not to urinate on sand or on loose dirt, but when there is a great need** (such as there is no other convenient place), **one may be lenient**. In any case, one may urinate on hard ground.

What about **washing hands**? Here too, it is best to look for a place in which the water will not be spilled on sand or soft dirt, but in a place of need, one may be lenient. However, there is a simpler solution. **Rav S.Z. Auerbach** allows using a sink which empties out among plants, as long as the water goes through a pipe first. This renders the act one of **causation=grama**, and one may be lenient about this if one does not intend to water the plants. In a similar way, if one washes one's hands over **metal or stone**, even if the water flows down to sand or soft dirt, this is permitted, since this is considered causation and one has no interest in wetting the ground. (In a case where one is interested in watering the ground, the act would be forbidden.)

Thus, it is permissible to wash one's hands over stone, even if the water will flow afterward into sand or soil with plants in them. Even if the stone has some dirt on it, there is no problem, since the mixture formed will be primarily liquid, so there is no true blending. Similarly, it is permissible to wash one's hands into a sink which empties into sand or plants, as long as one does not own them, does not benefit from the irrigation and is not interested in it.

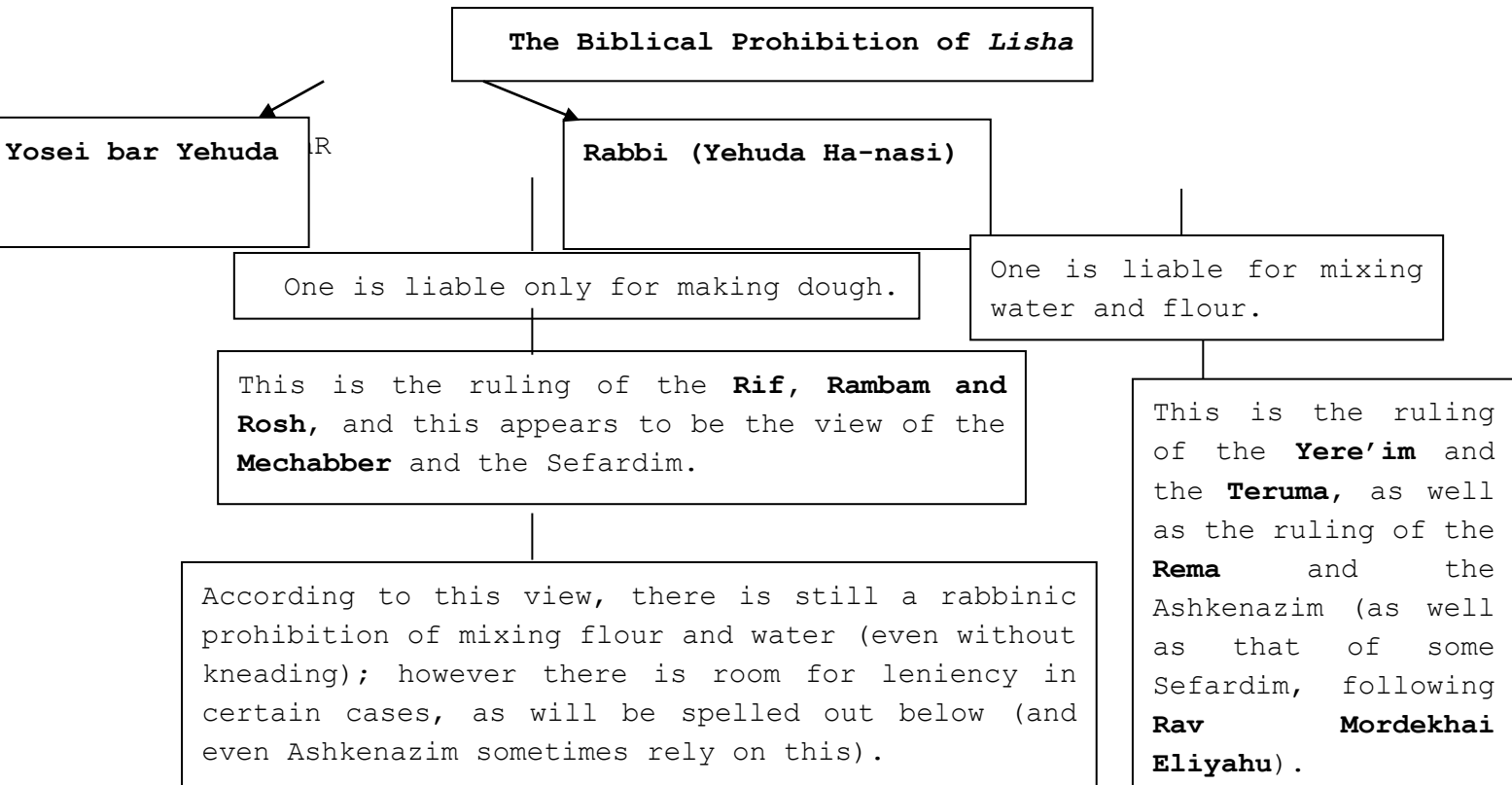
### Summary

In conclusion, it is forbidden to pour water on sand, and therefore children who are playing in a sandbox may not pour water in it. To wash one's hands, or urinate, on the ground, one should look for a place free of sand or loose dirt. However, in a case of need, one may be lenient (especially when one needs to relieve oneself), and there is also room for leniency if the water will first flow onto stone or metal and only after that reach the ground.



בס"ד

## LASH לט (Part II)



“not *bar gibbul*”= not kneadable and does not become a truly agglomerated mass. This is true, for example, of ashes, which are defined by the Gemara (18a) as not *bar gibbul*, since even after being kneaded with water, they do not form stable dough.

The Gemara seems to indicate two opposite views of a non-*bar gibbul* when it comes to the prohibition of *lash*. On the one hand, Abbaye raises the possibility (ibid.) that the law of a non-*bar gibbul* is **even more serious** than that of a *bar gibbul*: “Perhaps **Rabbi Yosei** only said this [requirement to mix in order to be liable] about flour, which is *bar gibbul*, but for ink, which is not *bar gibbul*, one should be liable!”

In other words, according to **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda**, one who mixes flour and water is not liable for *lash* until one actually kneads them, as we have seen above. However, according to Abbaye, this is applicable only to that which is *bar gibbul*; since one could form them into a doughy compound, one is not liable for *lash* until such dough is formed. However, when it comes to that which is not *bar gibbul*, **since in its very nature it is impossible to make a doughy compound out of it**, even **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda** would concede that one is liable for *lash* **for the simple act of putting in water!**

**Shabbat 155b:** Adding water to bran (the wheat husk which is used as animal feed), which is not *bar gibbul*, and it raises a possibility in the view of **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda** that such an act is completely **permissible**, and indeed supports this suggestion with an explicit *beraita*: “One may not put water into bran, according to Rabbi. **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda** says: ‘One may put water into bran.’”

A number of Rishonim (**Ritva**, *ibid.*; **Maggid Mishneh** 8:16) explain that because the bran is not *bar gibbul*, **kneading it is not forbidden by the Torah, but only rabbinically**; thus, according to **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda**, **adding water to it is indeed permissible**. The Rabbis only forbid adding water to a substance which may not be kneaded by Torah law, because one may come to actually knead it. However, the Rabbis do not forbid adding water to a substance where the kneading is only prohibited on a rabbinic level, for there is no concern of a Torah violation even for actual kneading. According to this, the law of that which is not *bar gibbul* is **less serious** than the law of that which is *bar gibbul*.

In light of the conflicting evidence in the Gemara, the Rishonim dispute the matter. The **Rif** (Beitza 18a) and the **Rambam** imply that according to **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda**, putting water into something which is not *bar gibbul*, such as ashes or bran, **is permissible**. On the other hand, **Tosafot** (18a, s.v. *Aval*), the **Raavad** (8:16), the **Rashba** (18a), the **Me’iri** (18a) and others rule in accordance with the view of Abbaye, who holds that putting water into something which is not *bar gibbul*, such as ashes, **is forbidden by the Torah**, even according to **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda**. According to them, the Gemara is lenient concerning bran only because, according to the conclusion of the Gemara, it is indeed considered to be *bar gibbul*. (An analysis of the legal status of bran in this regard is beyond the scope of this discussion.)

As for the practical halakha, the **Shulchan Arukh** (324:3) rules that one may add water to bran, in accordance with the view of **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda** (and afterwards he cites the view of **Rabbi**, who forbids this, as we have seen in our previous *shiur*); however, he does not note what the law is for something which clearly is not *bar gibbul* (such as ashes). The **Mishna Berura** (321:50) cites the two views regarding putting water into a substance which is not *bar gibbul*, and he does not decide among them explicitly. However, from his comments in the *Be’ur Halakha* (324:3, s.v. *Ein*) it seems that he is concerned about the stringent view.

In any case, this debate relates only to the view of **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda**, but according to the view of **Rabbi**, there is a Torah-level prohibition to put water into a substance which is not *bar gibbul*. This is what the **Mishna Berura** (324:10-11) writes: the Ashkenazic custom follows the stringent view of Rabbi, and according to this, one should not put water “in flour, in ashes or in anything.” However, in cases of great need, the **Mishna Berura** (*ibid.*) allows this, according to the view of the **Chayei Adam** (19:1), who holds that one may have a non-Jew put water into bran (and after that one must knead in an altered way, as we shall see below).

## V) *Belila Ava* and *Belila Rakka*

How may one prepare porridge for a child on Shabbat? May one mix juice with mashed fruit? Is one allowed to mix tea-biscuit crumbs with cheese? Is there a prohibition of *lisha* in preparing coffee?

The mass formed by an act of *lisha* may be of two consistencies: *belila ava* (a thick mixture) or *belila rakka* (literally, a soft mixture, i.e., a thin one). Naturally, there is also a third possibility when mixing two substances: that no true mixture is created at all. Respectively, these three types yield three different halakhic statuses:

1. By Torah law, it is forbidden to create a *belila ava*.
2. By rabbinic law, it is prohibited to create a *belila rakka*.
3. It is permissible to create a fully liquid or runny *belila*, as this is not considered a true *belila* at all. As the **Chazon Ish** points out (58:9): "Powders which dissolve in water may be mixed with water on Shabbat, and there is no problem of *lisha* in this."

This distinction emerges from the Gemara (155b-156a). The Gemara indicates that **Rabbi** and **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda** argue whether one may prepare dough from **flour made of parched grains** with an alteration, but they agree that one may prepare the dough known as *shatit* with an alteration. The Gemara attempts to resolve this apparent discrepancy as follows:

Yet they agree that *shatit* may be stirred on Shabbat... But you said that one may not mix? **There is no difficulty: one case is *ava*, and the other is *rakka*.**

Still, that is only if one does it in an unusual manner. How does one do it in an unusual manner?

Rav Yosef said: "During the week the vinegar is [first] poured in and then the *shatit*, whereas on Shabbat, the *shatit* is [first] poured in and then the vinegar."

In other words, dough made from parched-grain flour is a ***belila ava***, and that is why **Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda** and **Rabbi** dispute whether one may knead it with an alteration, *shinnui* (which we will deal with later). On the other hand, *shatit* dough is a ***belila rakka***, and therefore, according to all views, it is permissible to knead it with a *shinnui*, e.g., stirring in the ingredients in the opposite order of the standard recipe.

Why is such a *shinnui* effective only for a *belila rakka* and not for a *belila ava*? Apparently, the prohibition of *lisha* of a *belila ava* is **from the Torah**, while the prohibition of *lisha* of a *belila rakka* is **of rabbinic origin**. This also seems to be the implication of the explanation in the **Chiddushim Ha-meyuchasim La-Ran** (156a), as well as the view of the **Terumat Ha-deshen** (Ch. 53): making a *belila rakka* is not considered *lisha*. (The **Shevitat Ha-shabbat** writes the same, in his Introduction to the *Melakha of Lash*, 7). The **Chazon Ish** writes something similar (58:2) as well:

And it appears that the *shinnui* of putting the *shatit* in first and then putting in the vinegar is not considered a true *shinnui*, and therefore they only allow it for *rakka*, because it is not in the category of *lash* by Torah law; but with *ava*, such a *shinnui* would not help [because thick dough may not be kneaded by Torah law].

### Defining *Belila Ava* and *Belila Rakka*

What definition can be given to determine whether a mixture is considered to be a *belila rakka* or a *belila ava*?

The **Chazon Ish** writes (58:9, s.v. 156) writes:

It appears that *rakka* can be poured and emptied, but it is still a mass and not a liquid. But if there is so much water that it merely looks like cloudy water, it is not at all in the category of *lash*.

In other words, a *belila rakka* is a *belila* **which can be poured**. Even when there is a **mass**, if it can be poured and decanted from one vessel to another, this is a *belila rakka*, provided that the pouring is not in clumps, but rather “poured and emptied” — i.e., poured without interruption. If the mixture is a true **liquid**, the mixture is not a *belila* at all, but rather a suspension, solution or combination of two liquids, as we noted above. This approach is also taken by the **Shevitat Ha-shabbat**, *Lash, Be'er Rechovot*, Ch. 36.

The **Ketzot Ha-shulchan** (Ch. 130; *Baddei Ha-shulchan*, 3) provides a different distinction. According to him, a *belila rakka* is one which is **thinner** than its usual consistency:

It appears that the measure of the *belila* is not the same for all things; rather, for each substance, the way of its *lisha* makes one liable, and if one alters and makes it a bit thinner, it becomes a *belila rakka*...

The logic of this is that just as a *shinnui* in the order of putting in the ingredients is considered a *shinnui*, so too the making of a *belila* which is thinner than is customary is considered a *shinnui*. Thus, since it is defined as a *shinnui*, creating a *belila rakka* is only prohibited rabbinically, and where there is another *shinnui* (or two) its creation is permissible by the rules of *shinnui*.

The underlying dispute between the **Chazon Ish** and the **Ketzot Ha-shulchan** is that according to the **Ketzot Ha-shulchan**, the allowance for *belila rakka* is based on the law of ***shinnui***, and therefore one must check the ordinary consistency of each mixture, and from there one can extrapolate what is considered a *shinnui*. According to the **Chazon Ish**, on the other hand, the allowance is not based on the law of *shinnui* but **on the very definition of the melakha of *lash***: the Torah prohibition of *lisha* is limited to creating a thick mass such as dough. However, mixing the ingredients for a *belila rakka* is considered stirring, not kneading (as the Gemara notes that “*shatit* may be stirred”). Therefore, there is no significance to the question of



what the normal way is; the measure of the liquidity of the mixture is the only meaningful issue.

### Practical Halakha

In practice, the halakhic authorities follow the definition of the **Chazon Ish**, particularly since the definition of the **Ketzot Ha-shulchan** varies from food to food, and it is difficult to apply it pragmatically.

Therefore, **a mixture which cannot be poured from one vessel to another is a *belila ava*, which may not be made by Torah law.** This category includes pudding, instant mashed potatoes or thick porridge.

**If it can be poured continuously from one vessel to another, it is a *belila rakka*, the making of which is only banned rabbinically.** This category includes thin porridge.

If it is not a true mass, **but a very liquid substance, this is not in the category of *belila* at all, and it is permissible to make it.** This category includes coffee or any other liquid prepared with a powder or finely ground material.

The principles which we have seen here in terms of the different types of *belila* are very important in terms of the practical halakha, but first we must examine a final element, which we have already alluded to: *belila* with a *shinnui*. This will be addressed in our next *shiur*.

