

YESHIVAT HAR ETZION
ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

TALMUDIC METHODOLOGY
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Shiur #28: Different Types of *Bishul*

In a [previous shiur](#), we explored the nature of the *melakha* of *bishul*. Is it defined as the processing of food to improve it? Or should it be viewed as a more formal cooking process, independent of the improvement it imparts? We explored a unique situation in which a cooking process has been performed but a classic improvement has not taken place. In this *shiur*, we will address various forms of cooking and probe the degree to which they are integrated into the standard *issur* of *bishul*.

The closest derivative of cooking is baking. The two are generally viewed as indistinguishable, and we would expect them to be grouped together within the general prohibition of *bishul*. Interestingly, the *mishna* lists baking (*ofeh*) AND NOT cooking in its list of 39 *melakhot*. Since the *melakhot* performed in the *Mishkan* serve as the paradigms for the list of 39 *melakhot*, we would expect cooking (*bishul*) to appear in the list; the various dyes used to color *Mishkan* materials were **cooked**. The *gemara* explains the insertion of baking in place of cooking based on the interest of presenting the preparatory process of baking bread (*sidura de-pat*). The simple reading of the *gemara* suggests that cooking (*bishul*) and baking (*ofeh*) are equivalent; either term **could** have been employed, but *ofeh* was chosen for stylistic reasons. Almost all *Rishonim* maintain this parity, designating cooking and baking as identical and part of a broader *av melakha*.

However, an interesting Yerushalmi (*Shabbat, perek 7*) may indicate a *machloket Amora'im* as to whether *ofeh* is actually an *av* or a *tolada*. Presumably, it would be considered a *tolada* since it did not contribute to the construction of the *Mishkan*. If the *issur* of *bishul* is defined as the improving food, it would be exceedingly difficult to distinguish between cooking and baking. If such a distinction exists, it may confirm that *bishul* is a formal process, independent of any improvement. Since cooking and baking entail different processes, they cannot be incorporated into one *av melakha*.

As noted above, all the *Rishonim* equated cooking and baking. However, this question still applies regarding other cooking processes. The Bavli does not mention other forms of cooking, but a different statement of the Yerushalmi (7:2) probes the status derivative forms of cooking, such as frying, roasting, and

smoking. The Yerushalmi describes them all as categories of *bishul*, suggesting **full** integration and consequently **full** status as part of the core *av melakha* of *bishul*. This would seem to challenge the earlier statement of the Yerushalmi, which (at least according to one opinion) distinguishes between baking and cooking. Perhaps one could argue that baking is less similar to cooking than frying, as baking does not employ any liquid base.

There is a fascinating Pri Chadash (87:2) that defends the inclusion of roasting in the *av melakha* of cooking. The *korban Pesach* must be roasted and **not cooked**, yet the Torah commonly refers to this roasting process with the verb typically associated with cooking (*u-bishalta*). This syntactical association establishes a logical parity between the two.

Ironically, the need to “textually” defend the inclusion of roasting within *bishul* may indicate that the prohibition of *bishul* is, in fact, a very formal process. If *bishul* were merely a process of improvement, there might not be a need to **textually justify** the inclusion of roasting. Perhaps *bishul* is a formal process of cooking (excluding baking, which may be relegated to a *tolada*), and roasting is incorporated because the Torah deems it a sub-form of cooking.

An interesting Yerushalmi (*Nedarim* 6:1) raises three questions that appear to be related. Is it permissible to roast or fry meat and dairy together? Does the prohibition of *bishul* performed by a gentile (*bishul akum*) apply to smoking or frying? Finally, do smoking and frying violate *bishul* on Shabbat? This is a surprising series of questions, as we would have expected all these varieties of cooking to be equivalent to actual cooking, and thus prohibited in all three instances. Furthermore, these questions appear to clash with the aforementioned Yerushalmi, which equated the varieties of cooking.

The very possibility that smoking or frying should not be prohibited on Shabbat reflects that the PROCESS, and not the improvement, is prohibited. Since these processes are all different, they may not be forbidden on Shabbat. Additionally, comparing the status of frying and smoking on Shabbat to these processes when performed on milk and meat or by a gentile reinforces the point that this statement of the Yerushalmi views the **process** as the core of the prohibition, just as the **process** constitutes the prohibition of cooking meat and dairy and the prohibition of *bishul akum*.

A final variety of *bishul* surrounds the process of salting food. Salting is generally comparable to cooking in creating taste-transfers. For example, if kosher meat is salted together with non-kosher meat, the taste transfers and the kosher meat becomes forbidden. The *gemara* declares that *melicha* is like “*rotei'ach*” (salting is like heating), suggesting the parity between cooking and salting.

The *gemara* (*Shabbat* 75a) discusses potential prohibitions violated by salting on Shabbat. Since the *gemara* does not mention the prohibition of *bishul*, the Ramban (*Avoda Zara* 74b) claims that salting is not a *bishul* violation on Shabbat. The Ran (*Avoda Zara* 38b in the pages of the Rif) disagrees, claiming that salting would indeed violate *bishul*. Even though salting processes the food, it is a completely distinct process from *bishul*. If salting **does** entail a prohibition of *bishul* on Shabbat, as the Ran suggests, the *issur* must be defined as rendering change or improvement. The process of salting bears absolutely no comparison to cooking!