

Dough-like mixtures and runny mixtures

Three levels of mixtures

There are three types of mixtures as graded by levels of density:

1. It is prohibited by Torah law to create a dough-like mixture.
2. It is prohibited by rabbinic law to create a runny mixture.
3. A mixture that is entirely liquid is considered a liquid rather than a mixture, and it is permitted to create it, as noted by the *Hazon Ish* (58:9): “It is permitted to mix powders that dissolve into water, and there is no prohibition of Kneading.”



A dough-like mixture, which cannot be poured from one receptacle to another – the prohibition of Kneading applies by Torah law.



A runny mixture, which can be poured from one receptacle to another – the prohibition of Kneading applies by rabbinic law.



A liquid – there is no prohibition of Kneading.

The source of the distinction between the types of mixtures

The source of the distinction between the types of mixtures is based on the **Gemara** (155b-156a). It emerges from the Gemara

12. The *Hazon Ish* is lenient in this matter even with regard to a Jew, as explained in note 18.

that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi and Rabbi Yossi bar Yehuda disagreed about whether it is permitted to prepare dough from **flour made from unripe grain that was dried in an oven** if one prepares the dough in an unusual manner. They both agree that it is permitted to prepare a dough called *shatit*.¹³ The Gemara questions the reason for this distinction:

And they agree that one may mix the *shatit* on Shabbat... Didn't you say: One may not knead? This is not difficult: **This** [case where it is prohibited to knead] **is with a thick** [dough-like] **mixture, and that** [case where they agree it is permitted] **is with a thin** [runny] **mixture**. And this applies where one alters [the way that he kneads]. How does one alter [the way that he kneads]? Rav Yosef said: On a weekday one places the vinegar and then places the *shatit*; on Shabbat one places the *shatit* and then places the vinegar.

In other words, dough made from unripe grain that was dried in an oven is a **dough-like mixture**, and therefore Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi and Rabbi Yossi bar Yehuda disagree about whether it is permitted to knead it in an unusual manner (a topic we will address further). Conversely, *shatit* is a **runny mixture**, and therefore all agree that it is permitted to knead it in **an unusual manner**, such as by adding the ingredients in a different order than the usual.

Why does a change from the normal procedure allow one to form a runny mixture but not a dough-like mixture? It appears that the prohibition of Kneading applies to a dough-like mixture **by Torah law**, whereas it applies to a runny mixture **by rabbinic law**. The **Commentary attributed to the Ran** (156a) and *Terumat HaDeshen* (53) both imply that forming a runny mixture is not considered Kneading by Torah law (this is also stated by the *Shevitat Shabbat, Lash*, Introduction, 7). This is also stated by the *Hazon Ish* (58:2):

A dough-like mixture is prohibited by Torah law; a runny mixture is prohibited by rabbinic law

13. The *Rishonim* disagree about how to define *shatit*; see p. 1047 note 2.

It appears that placing the *shatit* and then placing the vinegar is not considered an entirely unusual manner of performing the act. Therefore, the Sages permitted this only with regard to a runny mixture, where there is no prohibition by Torah law. But this manner of unusual preparation is not effective for a dough-like mixture [to which the prohibition of Kneading applies by Torah law].

How do we define a dough-like mixture and a runny mixture?

Hazon Ish: A runny mixture is one that can be poured from one container to another

The *Hazon Ish* (58:9, s.v. 156; this is also the opinion of the *Shevitat HaShabbat, Lash, Be'er Rehovot* 36) defines the distinction as follows:

It appears that a runny mixture is one that can be poured out, but it is still a mass rather than a liquid. If the water is so plentiful that the mixture is merely like turbid water, the prohibition of Kneading does not apply at all.

In other words, a runny mixture is one that can be **poured**. Even if it is a **mass**, if it is able to be poured out from one container to another it is a runny mixture, on the condition that it does not fall as lumps but rather pours continuously. If the substance is an actual **liquid**, it is not a mixture to which the prohibition of Kneading applies, as mentioned above.

Ketzot HaShulhan: A runny mixture is more fluid than usual

The *Ketzot HaShulhan* (130, *Badei HaShulhan* 3) provides a different definition. In his opinion, the difference between a runny mixture and a dough-like mixture does not depend on a uniform standard. Rather, it depends on how the substance was prepared **relative to how it is usually prepared**:

It appears that the necessary density of the mixture is not the same for all items. For every substance, one is liable for kneading it in the normal manner, but if one alters it and prepares it to be a little softer than usual, it is considered a runny mixture.

The rationale for this definition is that just as altering the order in which the ingredients are added is considered an unusual manner of

performing the act of kneading, so too, preparing the mixture to be looser than normal is considered an unusual manner of preparing it. Consequently, preparing such a mixture is prohibited by rabbinic law, and when there is an additional variation (or two) from the normal method of preparation, it is entirely permitted.¹⁴

What is the root of the dispute between the *Hazon Ish* and the *Ketzot HaShulhan*? According to the *Ketzot HaShulhan* the leniency in the case of a runny mixture is based on the fact that one kneads in an **unusual manner**, and therefore the definition of what is considered usual or unusual must be determined separately for each mixture. By contrast, according to the *Hazon Ish* the leniency is not based on the fact that one is kneading in an unusual manner but is rather **a definition of the prohibition of Kneading**, i.e., the prohibition by Torah law applies only to the creation of a dough-like mixture. Creating a runny mixture is not defined as Kneading at all but rather as mixing, consistent with the Gemara's terminology when it states: "One may mix the *shatit*." Consequently, it does not matter what the normal density of this particular mixture is but rather, objectively, the properties of the mixture.

The root of the dispute

PRACTICALLY, the halakhic authorities have generally accepted the definition of the *Hazon Ish*, especially in light of the fact that

Practical *halakha*

14. There is also a third definition, which is more stringent than the two mentioned above. The **Gemara in *Berakhot*** (38a) states that one recites the blessing of *mezonot* on thick *shetita* and the blessing of *shehakol* on thin *shetita*. The **Rambam** (*Berakhot* 3:3) writes that "if it was thick **enough to be fit to eat and to chew**, one recites the blessing of *mezonot* beforehand . . . and if it is was soft **enough to be fit to drink**, he recites the blessing of *shehakol* beforehand." This implies that thin *shetita* is able to be drunk. Similarly, one might argue that with regard to the prohibition of Kneading on Shabbat, only something that can be drunk is considered a runny mixture, whereas something that cannot be drunk is considered a dough-like mixture. This definition clearly represents a significant stringency. This is the halakhic ruling of the ***Menuhat Ahava*** (2:9:12 and note 45). However, this is a novel idea, and the halakhic authorities did not rule in accordance with this stringency (see *Shevitat HaShabbat* and *Ketzot HaShulhan*, ad loc.).

the definition of the *Ketzot HaShulhan* varies from mixture to mixture and is therefore difficult to implement on a practical level. Consequently:

A mixture that cannot be poured from one container to another is considered a dough-like mixture, which it is prohibited to form by Torah law. Examples of this category include dough, pudding, mashed potatoes made from a powder mix, or thick oatmeal.

A mixture that can be poured from one container to another is considered a runny mixture, which it is prohibited to form by rabbinic law. An example of this category is pancake batter.

A mixture that is actually liquid is not subject to the prohibition of Kneading, and it is permitted to create such a mixture. Examples of this category include coffee, hot chocolate, or any drink made from a powder.

The fundamental points we have seen here with regard to the different types of mixtures are very significant in determining the practical *halakha*. In order to understand how this is so, we must learn an additional *halakha* with regard to mixing in an unusual manner.

