



THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

HALACHA SERIES ON HILCHOS SHABBOS

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These halachos were shown by Rabbi Ostroff to **HaGaon HaRau Moshe Sternbuch, shlita**



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May I wrap the challa on the urn with a towel?
Many are accustomed to place challa above the urn, on Shabbos or before and indeed there is nothing wrong in doing so. As explained in previous shiurim, challa is a baked solid and may be reheated above *yad soledes bo* in the permitted manner, i.e. above an urn or other container, on the hotplate or blech.¹

The problem is that one may not do *hatmana*, even before Shabbos.

What is hatmana?

Hatmana is the wrapping of food in order to store or contain heat. There are two types of *hatmana* - *hatmana* that adds heat - מוסיף הבל and *hatmana* that contains heat - אינו מוסיף הבל.²

Enveloping a food item with towels, sheets or cloth near or on a heat source is *hatmana* that adds heat.³ Although the wrappings do not add heat, the entire arrangement does, as we view the wrappings together with the heat source as a method that adds heat.

But I am wrapping the challa before Shabbos!
Chazal prohibited this even before Shabbos. This does not mean that you may not place a towel over challos; it means that you may not do *hatmana*. Because the normal manner to contain heat is by completely enveloping

the food item or container, wrapping a towel in a way that the challa is not totally enveloped **is** permitted. Leaving a noticeable section uncovered is not *hatmana*.

I would suggest that you leave the entire end of the challa unwrapped.

Does the same halacha apply to containers on the blech or hotplate?

Yes it does. One may not use a towel to completely envelope any single container. If the towel is placed so that a noticeable section of the container remains uncovered it is not *hatmana*.⁴ Consequently one may place a towel over a couple of containers on a heat source because the towel only wraps a portion of each container and not an entire container. It is also accepted that surrounding on all sides except the lid is not *hatmana*.⁵

What about an urn surrounded by an insulating sleeve?

This would seem to be a perfect case of prohibited *hatmana*. The sleeve is intended to 'add' heat to the electric urn and since it almost completely surrounds it. It is *hatmana* that may not be done even before Shabbos.

Which hatmana is permitted?

Hatmana before Shabbos **in the absence** of a heat source: I have seen people remove the soup from the heat source close to Shabbos for the Friday night meal and store it in

¹ Some *poskim* permit placing the challa directly onto the hotplate but one may not do so without asking a rav.

² *Simon* 257:1.

³ *Simon* 257:8.

⁴ See the *SS"K* 1:66 and footnote 195.

⁵ *Rama simon* 253:1, *M"b simon* 253:69, *SS"K* 1:66.

feather downs. This is perfect *batmana*, as the down completely envelops the container of soup. However, since this is performed before Shabbos and there is no heat source it is permitted. This is different to the challa on the urn that is close to a heat source.

And on Shabbos?

Such wrapping, even in the absence of a heat source, is prohibited on Shabbos.⁶ For example, the *cholent* container was removed from the heat source. It then became apparent that the *d'var torah* was taking longer than expected. The container had been placed on the counter without the intention of returning and thus cannot be returned back to the heat source. To save the day, the host then wished to wrap the container in a towel to conserve heat, until ready for serving. This is forbidden, being a classical case of *batmana*. The container of *cholent* may however be partially wrapped in a way that a noticeable section of the container is exposed.

May one fill a thermos with water from the urn on Shabbos?

The point is that on the one hand a thermos bottle contains and preserves heat because of the wrapping of the inner container, which would appear to be *batmana*. On the other hand it is a single *k'li* and *batmana* is usually the wrapping of a *k'li* with other items. For the same reason food wrapped by the container itself is permitted. Common custom is to use the thermos bottle on Shabbos for two reasons.⁷ A) It is a single *k'li*. B) The prohibition of *batmana* only applies to the *k'li* that is or was on the heat source. If its contents are transferred to another *k'li*, it may be wrapped.

⁶ *Simon* 257:2.

⁷ *Chazon Ish* *simon* 37:32, *Igros Moshe Orach Chaim* *simon* 95, *SS"K* 1:71.

May I place a pulka inside the cholent container to heat it up?

Obviously the cholent container is off the fire, because you would be doing prohibited *chazora* by 'returning' the *pulka* to the heat source. The *halachic* issue is whether *batmana* applies to food within food.

The answer is that *batmana* only applies to food in a container and not directly to food.

⁸ Accordingly the *pulka* may be put inside the cholent off the fire. ⁹ An egg in its shell might be subject to the constraints of *batmana*, because it is viewed as food within a *k'li*. ¹⁰ One may therefore not place a cooked egg inside a cholent to reheat unless a noticeable portion of the egg emerges from the cholent sea.

Vort on the Parsha

The *possuk* says the hidden things belong to *Hashem* but the revealed things belong to us and our children (29:28). The *K'sav Sofer* says that the time of *Moshiach's* arrival is hidden and known only to *Hashem*, but it is our duty to keep the *Torah*, perform *mitzvos* and good deeds, which will arouse *Hashem's* mercy and redeem us.

Food For Thought

What is the halacha with regards to immersing kishke inside cholent?

May I put matzo into my soup?

What about soup nuts?

Answers coming be"H next week.

⁸ *SS"K* 1:72.

⁹ You may not return the cholent to the fire because you would be placing the *pulka* on the fire.

¹⁰ *SS"K* 1 footnote 112.

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If you would like to send a question to Rav Ostroff, you can write to him at shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com.

Note: The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive p'sak.