

# HALOCHOSCOPE <sup>TOI</sup>

A raw liver was found wrapped in plastic inside a chicken. The chicken was cooked in a pot with soup and vegetables. What is the Kashrus status of the chicken, the soup, the pot and the utensils used to serve and eat them?

The issues:

(A) The restriction on eating blood

(B) Liver

(C) *Bitul*, neutralizing forbidden food; the plastic wrapper; the utensils

(A) *The restriction against blood*

This is one of the most serious Scriptural prohibitions on forbidden food. The Torah repeats the prohibition numerous times, and specifies the reward for observing this Mitzvah. It gives a reason for this Mitzvah, due to its being brought on the altar as the *Nefesh*, soul. It represents the soul of the person making an animal offering. The commentaries add, the “soul” means that the animal characteristics are in blood. Consuming them gives the person an animalistic nature.

The Torah categorizes blood in different levels of stringency. *Dam Hanefesh*, life-sustaining blood, is forbidden under penalty of Kareis. This blood pours out of the animal when major arteries are cut, letting it bleed to death. If an animal is killed in another way, this blood is still as seriously forbidden. Blood that is not needed to sustain life is called *Dam Aivarim*. If an animal is cut, it will not die of this bleeding. This also applies when the animal would die of the wound itself, but not of the bleeding. The punishment for intentionally consuming this blood is *Malkos*, lashes administered by a qualified Bais Din. This applies to any other blood extracted from the meat of an animal. However, when the *Dam Aivarim* has not left its source, but remains locked in its place, it is not forbidden. Thus, one may eat raw meat after washing off the surface blood.

Heating meat moves the blood around. Even if it remains locked in the meat, if it is moved within the flesh, it is considered *Dam Aivarim Shepireish*, blood separated from its source, and is forbidden. Therefore, one can not cook meat before ensuring that this blood is removed. Two methods are used to remove the blood, roasting and salting. Both draw blood out of meat. Blood remaining after

roasting it enough to make it edible is considered permissible blood. Likewise, blood that remains after meat is salted sufficiently, it is permissible. The time is determined by the Talmud and Poskim to be the time it would take to roast a piece of meat or to tan a hide, a little longer than a quarter hour, and ideally an hour. Because salting is like cooking, no blood should remain visible on the surface before salting. This would be absorbed back by the salting action. One should also not leave it too long with the salt. The salt that was removed could seep back. It is washed right after salting. The blood removed by the salt or heat must drain away.

The Poskim debate whether blood that was cooked or salted is relegated to a Rabbinical restriction. Only blood of animals or fowl is forbidden Scripturally. Blood of fish or permissible insects (some species of locusts) is forbidden due to its appearance. If it has a clear identifying mark, such as the scales of the fish floating in it, it is permitted. Human blood is a matter of debate between the Poskim. If one finds blood on his food that came from his mouth, he should not put it back in his mouth. Eggs can have blood as the chick begins forming, or blood from the mother chicken. This is worthy of a separate discussion. [See Krisos 4b 20b-22a Chulin 109a-113a Menachos 21a Psachim 74a-75b, Poskim. Tur, Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 66-67, 69-70, commentaries.]

### **(B) Livers**

The Poskim actually debate whether liver blood is ever Scripturally forbidden. This is based on a Talmud passage seeming to question whether liver that is cooked without its blood removed is permitted. One explanation is that it refers to salted liver. Due to its high concentration of blood the salt might not remove enough of it. Therefore, many Poskim maintain that their only method of Koshering liver is through roasting. This method is always considered the more reliable. For example, we rule that if meat was not salted within the first seventy-two hours of its slaughter, salting it will no longer help. Roasting it, however, will help. [Roasting will remove the bulk of the salt, but some will remain and could come out in subsequent cooking. Therefore, this meat may only be eaten roasted.] Due to the concentration of blood in the small tubes of these organs, and their surface membrane, it is necessary to cut through the organ before roasting it. This allows the blood to flow out of it. The other view is that it refers to raw liver. Salting is certainly as sufficient as roasting. Even unsalted liver could be permitted. It is practically a solid piece of blood, yet is permitted. It must be the type of blood that was never forbidden. It would be forbidden Rabbinically due to its appearance, but might not be forbidden

when cooked, since it can not be seen easily. The Talmud also discusses locking the blood in by scalding the liver in boiling water or vinegar. This is not used today in our communities. In practice we roast the livers before using them. [See Chulin 109a-111b, Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. Y.D. 72, commentaries.]

### **(C) Bitul**

When permissible food is mixed with forbidden food, the mixture is forbidden. If there are sixty parts of permissible food present to each part of forbidden food, the forbidden food is neutralized and the mixture is considered permissible. However, the original forbidden piece can not be considered "koshered" by the rest of the mixture. It must therefore be removed. If it is hot when removed, the utensils used to remove it become forbidden. The Talmud and Poskim maintain that no fowl has sufficient permissible parts to neutralize its liver. If it is cooked whole, with nothing added, one may assume that everything is forbidden. However, this presumes that the rest of the fowl would otherwise be permitted. Either it was salted and the liver was not, or it was roasted in a way that its own blood came out, but the liver's blood spread within it and did not leave it. Furthermore, in order to evenly spread through the "mixture" the food must be cooked in a watery medium. If it is roasted it does not spread. If the forbidden part is a liquid, it can spread a little deeper than if it were a solid imparting flavor alone. Even if it does not spread throughout, a layer must be removed. This could be a fine or a substantial layer, depending on the nature of the forbidden flavor or juices. If it is greasy, it can actually spread all the way through. Blood is not considered greasy enough. However, since we are not familiar enough with the exact meaning of greasy in this respect, nor do we know positively what is or is not considered greasy, we normally forbid roasted foods in the same way as cooked foods. To further complicate matters, there is a difference between *Davuk*, two foods that are attached and those that are roasted in immediate proximity but not connected. In addition, sometimes, part of the foods are immersed in the liquid and parts protrude from it. This sparks an entirely different debate on how much the forbidden part spreads, and on how much of the permissible part may be counted on to neutralize. The presence of a lid and evenness of the heating are additional factors.

The Talmud discusses a case where an organ that has a membrane can apparently protect food from absorbing forbidden fat that might even be *Davuk*. It acts by absorbing the main thrust of the flavor. It can also be counted as the fine layer that would need to be removed when flavor can not spread throughout the rest of

the mixture. The Poskim discuss whether this passage has any practical applications. It could be that membrane is like any other meat. In our case, if there is enough of the rest of the food to neutralize the liver, especially since it was all considered inside the liquid, the food should be permitted. Furthermore, if the plastic is fully sealed, though it might not be impervious to flavor passing through, it is not meat, and should certainly count as a membrane. This could even help if less than sixty parts of permissible food are present to neutralize. However, it might be perforated. Contemporary Poskim are reluctant to issue a comprehensive permit to rely on this. [See Igros Moshe Y.D. III:14.]

The original liver is still forbidden. If the mixture started out with enough to neutralize, then was depleted, but still remained hot, the new mixture could be forbidden. Thus, if the liver was discovered after enough of the permissible food was removed, the remaining utensils and food are forbidden. Further complications arise if the liver began below the liquid level or under a lid, then was left in the part of chicken protruding out of the liquid.

If the liver is removed from the mixture while it is hot, the spoon used to remove it is forbidden. If it is poured into another utensil while hot, the second utensil is forbidden due to flavor absorbed in its surface layer. Assuming that the plastic is sealed tight, it would absorb the blood like a membrane. It would now be forbidden, like a forbidden utensil. This can only impart its flavor to another utensil through a medium of food or liquid. Therefore, if the surface was dry when the other utensil touched it, it is not forbidden.

In conclusion, our case should be treated as a case of a forbidden mixture. The opinions that liver blood is not forbidden Scripturally, and that cooked blood is also only Rabbinically forbidden are not usually factored in. However, each case might have sufficient mitigating factors to issue a lenient ruling based on all these combined. The Poskim suggest that if such a situation is discovered in time, the entire pot should be allowed to cool before removing anything. Then an evaluation of the proportions should be made. [One could squeeze the liver (when it has cooled down sufficiently not to forbid utensils) into a small measure, such as a one ounce cup. Then, the proportion to the size of the pot can be calculated.] Regarding the liquid level, there being no consensus of Poskim, many tend to stringency. As always, other factors might bear on the case.