



The Laws of Eruv Tavshilin

Rabbi Akiva Niehaus

As we approach the holiday of Pesach 5780, it may be prudent to review the laws of *Eruv Tavshilin*, because we will have the privilege of performing this special mitzvah prior to the first days of *Yom Tov*. When *Yom Tov* falls out on Friday – leading into *Shabbos*, every household must prepare an *Eruv Tavshilin* before *Yom Tov* in preparation for *Shabbos*. By setting aside some cooked food and bread in honor of *Shabbos* before the onset of *Yom Tov*, one is permitted to prepare *Shabbos* foods on Friday. Let us explore why it is necessary, how it works, and the procedure used.

The Background

On *Yom Tov*, like *Shabbos*, one may not transgress the 39 forbidden *melachos*, with a few exceptions. One of the exceptions is the *melacha* of *bishul* (cooking) as it states (*Shemos* 12:16), “the only work that may be performed on *Yom Tov* is that which is needed so that everyone will be able to eat.” However, cooking on *Yom Tov* is only permitted if the food will be consumed on *Yom Tov*; cooking for a later date, be it a regular weekday, another day of *Yom Tov*, or *Shabbos*, is forbidden, and according to some opinions, may involve a Biblical prohibition. Accordingly, when *Yom Tov* occurs on Friday, it should be forbidden to prepare food on Friday for the next day, *Shabbos*. How, then, is one able to prepare fresh, tasty food for *Shabbos*?

To alleviate this concern, *Chazal* instituted a new procedure called *Eruv Tavshilin*, literally, the mixture of foods. If one prepares food for *Shabbos* before the onset of *Yom Tov*, he may continue the preparation for *Shabbos* on *Yom Tov*. The rationale for this is that if one begins the food preparation before *Yom Tov*, any cooking on *Yom Tov* is considered a mere continuation of the original cooking (*Rama O.C.* 527:1). Initially, one must be careful to ensure that all food prepared on Friday is edible before *Shabbos* begins. However, in extenuating circumstances, one may prepare food on Friday for *Shabbos* even if the food will not be edible when *Shabbos* begins (*Mishnah Berurah* 527:3).¹ Accordingly, special care must be taken to ensure that the *cholent* is prepared early enough on Friday to allow it to be edible (at least one-third cooked) by the time *Shabbos* begins.

As an extension of the above requirement, many people have a custom to accept *Shabbos* early when *Yom Tov* falls on Friday to ensure that all food preparation is completed well before nightfall (*ibid*).

The Procedure

The *Eruv* should be prepared on *Erev Yom Tov*, this year Wednesday, April 8th. If the *Eruv* was prepared on an earlier day, the *Eruv* is effective but should ideally be prepared again on *Erev Yom Tov* without a *bracha* (*Shulchan Aruch* 527:14).

The *Eruv* consists of two food items: one cooked and one baked.² As explained, by setting aside a cooked item and a baked item for *Shabbos* before the onset of *Yom Tov*, all subsequent preparations are considered a continuation of the original preparation rather than a new preparation. For this reason, we set aside a cooked item and a baked item because the vast majority of food preparations involve cooking and baking.

The cooked item should be at least the size of a *k'zayis* (approximately 1 fluid ounce) (*Shulchan Aruch* 527:3). It should be an item that is usually accompanied by bread (e.g. meat, fish, or eggs); common custom is to use a hard-boiled egg.³ Although one may use a cooked food even if it was not cooked specifically for the *Eruv*, the optimal form of the *mitzvah* is performed when one cooks a food specifically for the *Eruv*.⁴

The baked item should ideally be whole and at least the size of a *k'beitza* (2 fl. oz.), but it is sufficient if the piece is at least the size of a *k'zayis* (*Rama* 527:3). Ideally one should use bread (when an *Eruv* is done in preparation for *Shabbos* on a *Yom Tov* other than *Pesach*) or *matzah*, but if these are unavailable, cake



or cookies from the five species of grain may be used. Many people have a custom to use *matzah* as the baked item.

The baked and cooked items are held in one's hand and the following *beracha* is recited: "... *al mitzvas eiruv*," followed by the declaration, "*Bahadein eiruva...*" as printed in many *siddurim*. The declaration states that, with the *Eruv*, preparation for *Shabbos* may take place on *Yom Tov*. It is important that one understand the meaning of the declaration; if necessary, the declaration may be recited in English.⁵ After the declaration, the food items should be stored in a safe location so that they remain intact until *Shabbos*. In fact, the *Eruv* must stay intact until the preparations for *Shabbos* have been completed.⁶ It is customary to use the *Eruv's* baked item, if it is a whole bread or *matzah*, for *lechem mishnah* on *Shabbos*, and then to eat the *Eruv*-foods during *Seudah Shlishis*.⁷

Forgot to Prepare the *Eruv*?

If one forgot to prepare the *Eruv* before the onset of *Yom Tov* and remembered before *tzeis hakochavim* (nightfall), he may still prepare the *Eruv Tavshilin*.⁸ If he does not remember until after *tzeis hakochavim*, he may no longer prepare the *Eruv*, and should consult his Rav as to how he should conduct himself on *Yom Tov*.⁹

What Kind of Preparations are Permitted?

The *Eruv* is primarily designed to allow cooking and baking on Friday for *Shabbos*. In addition, the *Eruv* permits activities indirectly related to food preparation (e.g. lighting candles and washing dishes with hot water); it also permits preparations which do not involve *melachah* (e.g. straightening up the house for *Shabbos*). Other preparations which involve *melachah* and are not food-related (e.g. carrying a *machzor* to shul on Friday for *Shabbos* through a public domain) are subject to dispute; therefore, it is preferable to derive benefit from it on *Yom Tov* itself.¹⁰

It is important to stress that preparing the *Eruv Tavshilin* only permits actions which may be performed on *Yom Tov* and were prohibited merely because they were done in preparation for *Shabbos*; actions which are prohibited to be done on *Yom Tov* (e.g. turning on and off lights, using electric appliances) are never permitted, even if an *Eruv* was prepared. Additionally, the *Eruv Tavshilin* only allows preparation for *Shabbos*; preparation for a weekday remains prohibited.

Who Needs to Prepare an *Eruv Tavshilin*?

Any household which intends to cook, bake, or even reheat food on Friday for *Shabbos*, must prepare an *Eruv Tavshilin*.¹¹ Those who do not intend to do any food preparation may still need to prepare an *Eruv* for other preparations (see footnote).¹²

One *Eruv* is sufficient for all members of the household (*Mishnah Berurah* 527:56). A guest in a hotel or in someone's home needs to prepare an *Eruv* and does not automatically become part of the household's *Eruv* (see footnote).¹³

¹ The rationale for this requirement is based on the following: Logic dictates that a Rabbinical institution, such as *Eruv Tavshilin*, may not override a Biblical prohibition; it is thus self-evident that the *Eruv Tavshilin* is only effective where there is no Biblical prohibition. As explained above, according to some opinions, cooking on *Yom Tov* for *Shabbos* may involve a Biblical prohibition. In order to accommodate these opinions, one must be careful to ensure that all food prepared on Friday is edible before *Shabbos* begins, thus avoiding the Biblical prohibition. However, in extenuating circumstances, one may rely on the other opinions which rule that preparing food for *Shabbos* does not involve a Biblical prohibition (ibid.).

² According to most opinions, the main component of the *Eruv* is the cooked item – not the baked item – because the term "cooking" encompasses baking as well. However, in order to accommodate the position of some opinions which rule that baking is not included in the term cooking, one must set aside a baked item as well. If one set aside a baked item for the *Eruv* but failed to set aside a cooked item, the *Eruv* is not valid and must be prepared again in the proper way. If, however, one set aside a cooked item but failed to set aside a baked item, the *Eruv* is valid (*Shulchan Aruch* 527:2). Nonetheless, if one remembers before the



onset of *Yom Tov* that he forgot to set aside a baked item, he should take a baked item along with the cooked item and say the declaration again without repeating the *bracha* (*Mishnah Berurah* 527:7).

³ One explanation for this custom is that the *Eruv* must stay intact and edible until the preparations for *Shabbos* are finished. Accordingly, one must use a food item which does not spoil quickly, so the custom developed to use a hard-boiled egg, which satisfies this requirement (*Aruch HaShulchan* 527:13, *Ben Ish Chai - Shanah 1, Tzav 1*). As an aside, one should be careful to leave the egg in its shell because, according to many opinions, an egg should not be eaten if it was left overnight without its shell (see *Aruch HaShulchan Y.D.* 116:22). If the egg was shelled, it should be mixed with another food (e.g. mayonnaise) before the night passes.

⁴ See *Biur Halacha*, 527:6, s.v. *adashim*.

⁵ See *Mishnah Berurah* 527:40.

⁶ If the baked item was eaten (or ruined) before preparations for *Shabbos* took place but the cooked food is intact, *Shabbos* preparations may continue as usual (*Mishnah Berurah* 527:46). If, however, the cooked item was eaten, the *Eruv* is disqualified, unless a *k'zayis* of the food remains (*Shulchan Aruch* 527:15). If the *Eruv* is ruined or eaten while one is in the midst of food preparation, preparation of that particular food may be completed (*ibid.* 527:17).

⁷ *Mishnah Berurah* 527:48. The reason for this is that once an item is used for a *mitzvah*, it should be used for additional *mitzvos* (*ibid.*).

⁸ *Rama* 527:1. If doing so will cause one to miss the correct time to recite *mincha*, he should appoint a messenger to make the *Eruv* on his behalf. Alternatively, he may give all the food items he wishes to prepare for *Shabbos* as a present to a friend who prepared an *Eruv* and ask the friend to cook and bake the food (*Mishnah Berurah* 527:4).

⁹ In extenuating circumstances, there is a possibility that one may be able to rely on the Rav's *Eruv*. In addition, (a) on any *Yom Tov* other than *Rosh Hashanah*, there is an option to make the *Eruv* on the first day of *Yom Tov* with a *t'nai* - a condition (see *Shulchan Aruch* 527:22 for more details), and (b) one who forgets to prepare the *Eruv* may still light *Shabbos* candles but should only light one candle (*Mishnah Berurah* 527:55).

¹⁰ See *Mishnah Berurah* 302:17, *Levush* 528:2, *Noda B'Yehuda Tinyana O.C.* 25, and *Kinyan Torah* 3:70:2.

¹¹ *T'shuvos Shevet HaKahasi* 2:184.

¹² One who does not intend to heat or prepare food on Friday for *Shabbos* may still need to prepare the *Eruv* for other activities, such as lighting *Shabbos* candles or carrying items in a public domain. According to many *Poskim*, the *Eruv* should be prepared and the declaration recited, but the *bracha* should be omitted (*Kaf HaChaim* 527:113). Nevertheless, one who intends to light *Shabbos* candles and may possibly cook or bake for *Shabbos* should prepare the *Eruv* as normal (*Chut Shani, Yom Tov* pg. 150).

¹³ The guest may ask permission to join the household *Eruv* and pick up the *Eruv* food with intention to acquire a portion of the food prior to the *Eruv* setup. Alternatively, the guest may prepare his own *Eruv*, but should do so without a *bracha* (*Chut Shani* *ibid.* pg. 154). Guests who have been given free reign of the house and are welcome to help themselves to food and drink without specific permission (e.g. children visiting their parents' home for *Yom Tov*) are likely included in the household *Eruv*.