

ליקוטי ופסקי הלכות

"חוקי היום"

ותלמדם
"תוקף היום"
לעשות רצונך
בלבב שלם



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Kashering Liver

Parshas Balak 5781

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Issur of Blood in the Liver

Necessity of Knowing the Halachos of Roasting Liver

1. There are many places in Eretz Yisroel where one can buy chicken livers – fresh or frozen – that have not been kashered, e.g., in supermarkets or the like. Many people, especially young women, have no idea that these livers must be kashered by extracting the blood before they may be eaten. People also do not know the ins and outs of the relevant halachos because they never saw a liver kashered in their homes, leading to serious shailos about the issurim of blood and about their kitchens. Thus, we saw a need to discuss the halachos regarding this topic.

Learning the Halachos in Seminaries

2. Although girls in seminaries generally learn in halacha class that a liver needs to be kashered because of its blood, they cannot tell the difference between a liver before roasting, which is more red, and a liver after roasting, which is more brown, leading them to make mistakes.



3. When the halachos of kashering liver are taught in seminary, ideally the teacher should bring a non-kashered liver and a kashered liver to the class to demonstrate the difference for the girls; if the teacher would kasher a liver in front of them meticulously according to halacha, that would be even better, as hearing does not compare to witnessing. This way, they will see the kashering of a liver at least once in their lives, something which was once routine in every Jewish home.

Issur of Blood in the Liver

4. Although the liver is completely full of blood, the Torah allows us to eat it. The Torah only forbids blood which can be poured like water, whereas the blood in the liver is coagulated within the animal's body and cannot be poured like water (רש"י חולין דף ק"ט ע"ב ד"ה הכבד). Nevertheless, blood that comes out of the liver is like blood that comes out of any other body part and may not be consumed. Thus, one may not cook the liver since when it is cooked, blood is released into the pot, forbidding all its contents, and then reabsorbed into the liver, forbidding that too.

Released Blood

5. The poskim argue whether blood released from the liver is assur deoraisa or only derabanan (פמ"ג שפ"ד סק"ד); most poskim are of the opinion that the issur is only derabanan (שפ"ד סק"ב).

Salting Is Not Enough to Extract Blood from the Liver

6. Blood can be extracted from other types of meat either by roasting over a fire (ש"ע י"ד סי' ע"ז) or by salting (ש"ס סי' ט"ט). When it comes to liver though, the Shulchan Aruch rules that due to the copious amount of blood inside, salting is not enough to extract the blood, and it can only be kashered through roasting (ש"ע סי' ע"ג ס"א).

Three Days without Salting or Roasting

7. **Meat.** There is a halacha that if meat went three full days from the shechitah without being salted, the blood inside dries up and cannot be extracted through salting (ש"ע סי' ט"ט ס"ב). Then, it can only be kashered through roasting. After it is roasted, it may not be cooked due to a concern that there may be blood left inside that will be released if it is cooked. Bedieved, though, if it was cooked after being roasted, it may be eaten (ש"ע ש"ם).

8. **Liver.** When it comes to liver, some poskim say that even if it was not roasted within three days of the shechitah, it may be cooked after it is roasted (ש"ע ש"ם אפרים י"ד סי' פ"ח, כ"פ סי' ע"ג סק"ה). However, many poskim hold that if three days passed before it was roasted, it may not be cooked after it is roasted (ש"ע ש"ם אפרים י"ד סי' פ"ח, וכן מצד החכ"א). ש"ע צמח צדק סי' קכ"א, מנחת יעקב כלל ד' סק"ג, וכן מצד החכ"א (כלל ל"ד סי"ג, די יהודה פיה"א דוף דק"ד, חמוצי דניאל סי' ל"ד הובא בפתחת"ס סי' ט"ט סק"ז).

9. Thus, stores that sell fresh liver which was not kashered must inform their customers exactly when the shechitah took place so that they know until when they can roast it and still be able to cook it afterward. If they do not know when the shechitah was, they must inform their customers that the liver should not be cooked after it is roasted.
10. **Pan frying.** Whenever liver may not be cooked after it is roasted (above, 8; below, 12), it may also not be pan fried with oil, which, in halacha, is considered cooking. Thus, in a case where liver may only be roasted and not subsequently cooked, it may not be pan fried with oil [e.g., along with fried onions] (חכ"א כלל ל"ה ס"א).

Liver that Soaked in Water or Blood

11. In halacha, soaking or pickling something for 24 hours is considered a form of cooking ["כבוש כמבושל"]. The poskim argue about the status of a liver that soaked in water or its blood for 24 hours: some say that according to the Rama, who holds that a liver cooked without being roasted is assur (רמ"א סי' ע"ג ס"א), it is also assur if it soaked (מנחת יעקב). (כלל כ"ד סק"ב בשם שו"ת צמח צדק סי' קכ"א, פמ"ג סי' ט"ט סק"ס).
12. However, several poskim write that a liver that soaked does not become assur (שו"ת שער אפרים סי' פ"ח, פ"ח פ"ח סק"ט, שו"ת מעיל צדקה סי' ל"ה ועוד), but the poskim write that it should not be cooked after being roasted. The reason is that since it soaked with its blood, there is a concern blood will be released when it is cooked (דרכי תשובה סק"ג בשם הג' חת"ס מהוד"ב).

Frozen Liver, Meat

13. **Meat.** It is very common nowadays for meat or liver to be frozen immediately after shechitah, before the blood is extracted to kasher it. The poskim discuss this from two angles: **1)** Do we count the three days (above, 7) from the time of shechitah, like other meat, even though the meat is frozen, or do we say when the meat is frozen, the clock is also frozen and the time the meat was frozen is not counted in the three days (ערוה"ש סי' ע"ג סעי"ט)? **2)** Is the meat assur due to soaking ["כבוש"] since it "soaked" in ice (פמ"ג י"ד, פמ"ג) (מנחת יעקב בשו"ת בסוף הספר סי' י"ד, פמ"ג) (שפ"ד סק"ס, שו"ת אנ"מ ח"א יו"ד סי' כ"ז)?
14. **Liver.** The poskim also argue about the status of a liver that was frozen without being kashered. May it be cooked after it is roasted, or is it assur to cook it after it is roasted like liver that was not kashered within three days (above, 8) or like liver that soaked for 24 hours (above, 12)?
15. Thus, certainly lechatchila frozen liver should not be cooked after it is roasted because of the above concerns unless there is a specific need to do so (חזו"א הובא בספר תורת הבשר פ"י סי"ב).
16. Some hechsherim certify frozen liver available in supermarkets that was not roasted, including the words "For roasting only" on the package. The intent is that the liver needs to be roasted properly and may not be cooked afterward due to the reasons above (14).

Problems

17. **Cooking without roasting.** There were some people who bought these frozen livers without understanding the intent behind the label due to lack of knowledge. They thought it was simply saying that the liver tastes best roasted. Based on how they understood the label, they pan fried the liver without roasting it to extract the blood, which was a problem since frying something dry is considered a form of cooking (חכ"א כלל ל"ה ס"א).
18. In the above case, the liver itself may be eaten according to the Mechaber (שו"ע י"ד סי' ע"ג ס"א). The Rama holds that the minhag is to treat the liver itself as assur (ש"ם, ט"ז סק"ד). As far as the pot/pan, the Mechaber agrees it becomes assur (ש"ם ס"א). As far as the plate the liver was eaten off of while it was hot and with no liquid, the Pri Megadim (שפ"ד סק"ח) and Chavos Daas (סק"ג) hold it is like irui from a broken stream and therefore mutar (ע' מש"כ שו"ת חוקי חיים ח"א סי' כ"ג).

19. **Put liver in cholent.** A young woman once bought one of these unroasted livers. Without realizing she had to roast it first, she put it in her cholent. Eeveryone complimented her on how soft they were!. The status of the cholent is as follows: if the volume of the cholent is sixty times that of the liver, the pot and cholent are mutar, but the liver itself is assur. It must be removed with a plastic spoon or a toothpick, not a regular spoon, since the volume of a spoon is not sixty times that of the liver and the spoon would become assur.
20. If the volume of the cholent is not sixty times that of the liver, the cholent and the pot are assur too. If the cholent was ladled onto a plate, the plate is mutar (שו"ת חוקי חיים שם).
21. Due to these cases and others, kashrus organizations should not allow unroasted liver to be sold to the general public, e.g., in a supermarket; this has become practice of the Eidah Chareidis (שו"ת שם שם). Hechsherim that allow the sale of unroasted liver should know that they are causing many problems to the public.

How to Kasher Liver

Cutting the Liver

22. Due to all the blood in the liver, Chazal required making cuts in the liver while it is whole before roasting it to allow all the blood to drain as it is roasted. The way this is done depends on whether or not it will be cooked or fried after it is roasted, as will be explained.
23. **Livestock liver.** To prepare livestock liver for roasting, one must make cuts in a crisscross pattern along the entire length of the liver (דברי סופרים) and position the side with the cuts downward so that the blood flows out (שו"ת שם).
24. **Chicken liver.** Chicken liver also requires crisscross cuts. Lechatchila, chicken liver which is naturally divided into two sections should have each section cut. Bedieved it suffices if one section was cut (בי"י).
25. **Bedieved.** If a liver was not cut before it was roasted, according to the Mechaber it does not help to cut it and then roast it a second time (דברי סופרים). The Rama holds that if it was not cut, one can remove the blood vessels after it was roasted and then he can even cook it. After it is roasted though, merely puncturing the blood vessels is not enough (די יהודה פיה"ק סק"ב).
26. **Eating without cooking/frying after roasting.** Some say that if one wants to eat the roasted liver without cooking it afterward, it is enough to cut it lengthwise or widthwise to drain the blood from the blood vessels. If one did not cut it before it was roasted, he should cut it afterward; then everything other than the blood vessels is mutar (שו"ת סיג, פרי"ה סק"א). Others say even a livestock liver does not even need to be cut lechatchila since we are not concerned for the blood in the blood vessels (רמ"א, חכ"א כלל ל"א סי"ז).
27. **Puncturing.** Some hold that instead of a crisscross cut, one can puncture the liver until the blood vessels many times with a knife (רמ"א), thorn, or toothpick (איסור והיתר). Some poskim say this may be relied on lechatchila (דברי סופרים) and the machmir (דברי סופרים); others say it only helps bedieved (שו"ת סיג, פרי"ה סק"א). תורת חסאת כלל כ"ד דין ו', שו"ת סיג, פרי"ה סק"א).
28. **Removing the gallbladder.** The gallbladder is attached to the liver. Some write that if the gallbladder of a chicken (רמ"א) is removed along with a sliver of liver, that is akin to a crisscross cut since it gives the blood a place to drain from (רמ"א סי"א) if the opening is facing downward (שו"ת מהר"ם שיק י"ד סוף סי"ז).
29. This is what slaughterhouses with the finest hechsherim today rely on: they cut the gallbladder away from the liver. The non-Jewish workers must be supervised to make sure they cut off a thin slice of the liver with the gallbladder; otherwise, removing the gallbladder does not help.

Rinsing the Liver before Roasting

30. The minhag is lechatchila to rinse the liver in water before roasting it to get rid of any blood, even if it will be eaten without cooking it after it is roasted (תורת חסאת הובא בשו"ת סי"ז סק"ט). However, there is no halachic requirement to soak it in water for half an hour like other meat (שו"ת חשב האפוד ח"ב סי"ז).
31. Lechatchila it should be rinsed after it is cut in a crisscross pattern. If it was only cut after it was rinsed – even if it was cut right away – it must be rinsed again (קיצור שו"ת החדש סי"ז פ"ב בהערה).
32. Nevertheless, bedieved the liver is mutar even if it was not rinsed before it was roasted (שו"ת שם).

Arranging Livers on a Rack

33. The livers must be placed on a rack, skewer, or roasting spit so that there will be room for the blood to drain when it is roasted over the fire. It is assur to roast liver in a way that the blood will have nowhere to drain (חוו"ד סי"ז ע"ו סק"א, די יהודה פיה"ק סק"א).
34. The livers must be arranged so that the fire is under their entire surface areas. One liver cannot be on another one in a way that prevents the fire from properly drawing out the blood.
35. Oil may be smeared on the rack before the liver is placed on it to prevent the liver from sticking to the rack when it is roasted. The oil does not prevent the fire from drawing out blood (מו"ד הגר"מ, בראנדסדארפער, בעל קנה בושם).

36. A liver may be roasted directly on coals since the blood can drain between the coals.

Salting before Roasting

37. Strictly speaking, there is no need to salt a liver before roasting it since roasting draws out all the blood (שו"ת י"ד סי"א). Nevertheless, the minhag is to sprinkle a bit of salt right before the roasting, when the liver is already on the rack or spit (רמ"א שם, בן איש), but the liver should not just sit there with the salt before it is roasted.
38. The amount of salt put onto liver before roasting is more than one would put on to season a dish but less than the amount needed to extract blood when kashering other meats (רמ"א שם).
39. Bedieved it is fine if one roasted a liver without salting it. Also, if no salt is available one may roast a liver without it (רמ"א שם).

Types of "Fire" for Roasting

40. It makes no difference if the heat source is underneath or above the liver (שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ו סי"ז ק"ז).
41. **Oven.** Most poskim hold one can roast a liver in an oven even though there is no actual fire since it has the heat of a fire (פמ"ג סי"ז ע"ה משב"ז). (סק"ב, שו"ת חשב האפוד ח"א סי"ז ק"ב וק"ג). There should also be a designated or disposable tray under the liver for the blood to drain onto so that the oven does not become assur. Also, the oven door should be left open.
42. **Electric grill.** Most Acharonim allow liver to be roasted on an electric grill if the heating element gets red hot (שו"ת חשב, האפוד ח"א סי"ז ק"ג).

How Long to Roast It

43. Strictly speaking, the liver must be roasted until most people would eat it, about halfway roasted (שו"ת שם, שו"ת סי"ז ע"ב וס"ה, שו"ת שם). In other words, if it needs to be roasted for ten minutes to be fully done, one may assume all the blood drained out after five minutes (פמ"ג סי"ז ע"ו סוף סק"ד).
44. However, some are machmir to roast it fully (מהרש"ל, ב"ח הובא בט"ז סי"ז). Others are machmir to roast it until the outside is dried since we are not expert enough to know what is considered half cooked (הג"ש שיערי דורא הובא בט"ז שם). This is the proper practice (ט"ו).

Rinsing after Roasting

45. The minhag is to rinse the liver with water after roasting it, whether it will be cooked later (רמ"א ע"ג סי"א) or eaten roasted without cooking it (רמ"א שם סי"ה). Bedieved if one did not rinse it after roasting it, it is mutar even if it was already cooked (די יהודה פיה"ק סק"ו).
46. Lechatchila the liver should be rinsed three times, in the same manner that other meats are rinsed after they are salted (שו"ת סי"ז ע"ו). (סק"ט, מנחת יעקב כלל כ"ד סק"ט, פמ"ג שפ"ד סק"ה).
47. The livers can be rinsed while still on the rack they were roasted on (דברי סופרים קיצור הל' מליחה פ"ד סי"ב).

Flipping Livers during the Roasting

48. If one is roasting liver and wants to ensure it is roasted well, he may flip it over (מנחת יעקב כלל כ"ד סק"ו, פמ"ג שפ"ד סי"ז ע"ו סק"ב). However, the minhag is to be careful not to flip a liver many times while it is roasting since doing so causes the blood to trickle all over the liver and remain on it. However, even if it was flipped multiple times, bedieved it is not assur (רמ"א סי"ז ע"ו ס"ב).

Removing Liver from Rack Immediately after Roasting

49. Some say one must make sure to remove the liver from the rack immediately after it is roasted and taken off the flame (לי"א בשו"ת סי"ז) so that the blyos of blood in the rack do not make the liver assur. As long as it is near the fire, though, this is not a concern because of the rule that "as it absorbs, so it releases." However, the Mechaber rules that the minhag is to consider the liver mutar (שם).
50. The Rama rules that lechatchila one should be careful to remove the liver from the rack as soon as it is taken off the flame. Bedieved, though, it is not assur (רמ"א שם).

51. If livers were rinsed while still on their rack after being roasted (above, 47), they do not need to be taken off as soon as they are done being roasted.

Libun of the Rack, Spit, or Knife

52. The Mechaber holds that the spit or rack the liver was on, as well as a knife or fork that was stuck into the liver while it was being roasted, do not require libun after the roasting since when a fire begins to heat meat, it draws the blood out such that it does not get absorbed in anything near it (שו"ת שם).
53. However, the Rama holds that lechatchila the spit or rack that the liver was on, as well as a knife or fork used to flip the liver while roasting, are assur. Accordingly, they may not be used for cutting or any other use without libun. However, bedieved if they were used without libun, they do not make anything assur (רמ"א שם).
54. Therefore, the minhag is to do libun to these utensils before using them for other things (קיצור שו"ת החדש), but they do not need libun before roasting other meat or liver to extract its blood (די יהודה פיה"ק, סק"ב). Still, there are those who are machmir to do libun even before using them to extract blood through roasting again.