

### Defined Contribution

May 9, 2024

**Q** My non-Jewish housekeeper put a pot of soup on the stove. By the time I noticed, it was already mostly cooked. Can I do anything to salvage it, or is it forbidden as *bishul akum*?



**A** Foods that are both inedible raw and fit for a king's table, if cooked by a non-Jew, are forbidden as *bishul akum* (Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 113). If a Jew continues cooking that was started by a non-Jew, the food is *bishul Yisrael* and kosher (ibid. 6, 9).

According to the Mechaber, the Jew must have intervened before the food reached the level of *Ben Drusa'i's* food (one-third cooked), but the Rama says it can still be salvaged by the Jew's input as long as it was not yet fully cooked.

In a case of financial loss, or when time is of the essence (e.g. on Erev Shabbos or if guests are coming), the Mechaber concedes to the Rama (see also Aruch Hashulchan ibid. 46).

If the food was fully cooked, it cannot be made kosher, even if it cools down and is reheated by a Jew (Pri Chadash 112:22). If the taste will improve with additional cooking, the *Acharonim* debate whether the food can still be rectified (see Chelkas Binyamin 112:12 for a broad discussion). One may rely on the lenient view (Sheivet Halevi 2:45).

The Jew's input can be as minimal as extinguishing the flame and reigniting it. Other small contributions to the cooking are also adequate. (This is necessary on Yom Tov, when fire may not be extinguished.) For example, stirring soup (Shulchan Aruch ibid.), even though it isn't essential for the cooking (Levush ibid. 7), or flipping over a food being roasted or fried.