

סימן שיט

- 1) What is בורר and how is it different than זורה and מרקד?

זורה is winnowing, the sorting of the kernels of wheat from the chaff by throwing the mixture in the air and allowing the wind to carry the chaff. בורר – sorting, is performed after winnowing to remove debris and pebbles from the kernels. מרקד – sifting, is performed after the grain is crushed and made it into flour in order to remove imperfections from the flour. The גמרא explains that although all these three מלאכות perform the same act of separating the bad from the good, they are listed as different מלאכות because each of them was performed separately in the משכן.

- 2) You want to help around the house for Shabbos, so you decide to refill the saltshakers. But this time you add some rice grains to absorb the moisture. When your wife sees what you are doing, she calls out “don’t do that! We won’t be able to use them on Shabbos – it’s בורר!” Is she right?

The S”A in 'א סעיף א' *passkins* that sorting with a כלי is prohibited. **Rav Moshe (2)** explains that a "כלי" includes any item that facilitates the sorting. **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach/חזון-איש (3,5)** and the ילקוט יוסף explain that a "כלי" only includes objects that are designed to sort and are not used during the meal. Therefore, Rav Moshe forbids the use of such a saltshaker since the lid is facilitating the ברירה. However, RSZA and the ילקוט יוסף (4) permit. *Lema'ase*, most *Ashkenazi posskim* recommend not using it (since the חזון-איש/RSZA might have only suggested it as a possibility but not *lema'ase*), but *Sephardi posskim* permit.

- 3) Your *frum* friend is over for lunch but is refusing to drink from the water pitcher. “It has a narrow spout preventing the ice from leaving! – it’s בורר!” Is he right?

The **ארחות שבת (6)** writes that if the ice cubes are big, they are not considered mixed with the water and using the pitcher is permitted. However, if the cubes have begun to melt and are smaller, they are considered mixed with the water. If so, RSZA/חזון-איש would permit the use of the pitcher because its use is considered "דרך אכילה", since the sorting is done during the meal, while Rav Moshe would forbid since the spout is facilitating the sorting and considered "דרך ברירה". *Lema'ase*, most *Ashkenazi posskim* recommend not using it (though those who do have on what to rely), but *Sephardi posskim* permit.

- 4) At dessert, you bring a tea kettle to the table. Your *frum* friend gasps, “the kettle has a filter on the spout! You can’t use that on Shabbos!” Is he right?

If the leaves are settled at the bottom of the kettle, the water that is above them is not considered a mixture and you may pour out a cup (as long as there will be water left on the leaves). However, if the leaves are mixed throughout the kettle, it would be subject to the מחלוקת of Rav Moshe and the חזון-איש/RSZA. *Lema'ase*, most *Ashkenazi posskim* recommend not using it (though those who do have on what to rely), but *Sephardi posskim* permit.

- 5) You offer to make him tea using a tea bag (in a כלי שלישי) and he agrees. After it sat in the water for a sufficient amount of time, you ask him why he isn't taking the tea bag out. "Because I am *Shomer-Shabbos*! It's בורר to take it out!" he responds. Are you not allowed to remove a tea bag from the tea?

The tea bag is mixed with water and leaves, and holding the bag in the air is sorting out the water from the leaves using a כלי – i.e., the bag. Rav Moshe would forbid since the tea bag is facilitating the ברירה, while RSZA/חזון-איש would permit because it is considered דרך אכילה since it is done during the meal for immediate consumption. *Lema'ase*, most *Ashkenazi posskim* recommend removing the bag with a spoon, but *Sephardi posskim* permit.

- 6) You hand him a large spoon with which to take his tea out, but he still refuses. "The spoon you gave me has holes in it, it is still בורר!" Are you allowed to use a slotted serving utensil on Shabbos?

The ארזות שבת (7) writes that even RSZA/חזון-איש would forbid the use of a slotted spoon for serving. He explains that a tea kettle's main purpose is to store and serve tea, and for this reason, the filter on the spout is not considered "דרך ברירה". However, the slotted serving spoon is specifically designed to sort and is forbidden for use since it is considered a כלי that is made for ברירה. The ש"כ writes that a slotted spoon may be used if you quickly remove the food (and in this case the teabag) without the specific intention of dishing out the food and leaving the liquid.

- 7) You made chicken soup with chicken and many different types of vegetables, but your children only want the broth. Are you allowed to tilt the pot while placing the lid on it, which will allow for only the liquid to escape while keeping the solids in the pot?

Rav Moshe would forbid since the lid and pot combination are facilitating the sorting. **RSZA** quoted in (פ"ג סקקע"ו-קע"ז) agrees that this is forbidden because actively choosing to use the lid in conjunction with the pot to sort makes it into a "כלי ברירה", similar to choosing a slotted ladle that is made to sort.

- 8) You are making a salad for lunch and some of the lettuce leaves are bad. You know you need to separate the good leaves from the bad ones, but from what time can you start

preparing for the meal? What is considered "מיד"? Are you allowed to prepare the salad before going to shul?

Rav Moshe (11) *passkins* that there is no specific time frame for "מיד". Rather, it includes as much time that is needed to prepare for that specific meal. The **שש"כ** (12) writes that if you are hosting a large meal that requires a few hours of preparation, those hours of preparation are considered "מיד" and in that time you are even allowed to prepare the dessert. The **שש"כ** (13) adds that if you will be too busy later on in the day, you are not allowed to sort when preparing for the meal beforehand. Therefore, sorting before going to shul is forbidden even if you want to eat right after shul.

- 9) At the end of your Friday night meal there is a knock on the door. "Can I have a cucumber?" your neighbor asks. The vegetable drawer in your fridge is a mess, mixed with all types of veggies and you are thinking to yourself that he most likely needs the cucumber tomorrow. Are you allowed to sort the cucumber from the drawer and give it to him?

RSZA (14) *passkins* that you are allowed to sort in order to lend your neighbor a cucumber and you do not need to ask him when he will be using it. However, if you know he will only use it tomorrow and you are available tomorrow throughout the day, you are not allowed to sort it in the evening in order to lend it to him.

- 10) You are eating at friends for Shabbos lunch, but before you leave the house your wife asks you to get a change of clothing for the baby. The baby's drawer is a mess. Are you allowed to dig deep to remove the Shabbos outfit and bring it with you?

RSZA (15) *passkins* that although you are sorting the specific garment you want from the messy drawer (i.e., אוכל מתוך פסולת) using your hands (ביד), it is still forbidden since you are not immediately using the clothing (i.e., you are not fulfilling the requirement of מיד – you will only use the change of clothing if the first ones get ruined).

- 11) An hour before סעודה שלישיית, you realize that you ran out of challah, but there are a few pitas in the bottom of the messy freezer drawer. You are about to remove them when your wife says, "I learned in seminary that you can't do that! It's בורר!" Is she right?

RSZA (16) *passkins* that sorting an item from a mixture and letting it sit is only permissible if the sitting enhances the taste of the food and could not have been done before Shabbos. Therefore, if the freshness of the pitas would not be affected if they were removed from the freezer before Shabbos, you are not allowed to remove them from the messy freezer drawer on Shabbos. The reason is that since removing the pitas could have been done before Shabbos, letting them sit on Shabbos after removing them from the freezer is not considered "מיד". In such a situation, **RSZA** (21) and **Rav Moshe** (22)

passkin that you can empty out the freezer drawer and spread the contents out (assuming there is no מוקצה in the freezer). Once the “mixture” is abolished, you can remove the *challah*.

- 12) On Friday night, your wife served the most delicious meat soup filled with small pieces of meat. It was so good that you also wanted some for the morning, but you can't heat up soup on Shabbos. Are you allowed to remove the small pieces of meat from the soup and heat them up on the *plata*?

RSZA (16) and the ארזות שבת (17) agree that in such a situation you are allowed to sort the meat out of the soup (ביד + אוכל מתוך פסולת) and then let it heat up over time on the *plata*. The placement and time sitting on the *plata* is still considered "מיד" since it is essential for the enhancement of the meat's flavor and is something that could not have been done before Shabbos.

- 13) You are planning on waking up for *vassikin* on Shabbos morning and the lights in the house will be off. Are you allowed to set aside a חומש from the bookshelf the night before? Are you allowed to set aside a חומש that is mixed with a pile of *sefarim* on the table?

RSZA (24) *passkins* that books on a bookshelf are not considered a mixture (since they are easily identifiable from the outside). This would apply even to a ש"ס where the מסכתות are out of order and thus, the three requirements of בורר do not apply. However, books that are scattered and piled on a table are considered a mixture and removing one of them is only permitted if the three requirements of בורר are met.

- 14) Your Rosh Yeshiva is coming over for Shabbos lunch and you know he doesn't like the white meat pieces of chicken. Are you allowed to remove all the white meat from the platter before he arrives?

Rav Elyashiv (26) *passkins* that if all the pieces of chicken were cooked in the same way, the pieces are not considered a mixture and you are allowed to remove the white meat from the platter. However, **RSZA** *passkins* that white and dark meat are comparable to two different types of food where the laws of בורר apply when you do not want to eat one of them. Therefore, you are not allowed to remove the white meat since it would be considered אוכל מתוך אוכל.

- 15) Your prepared grilled and cooked chicken on the same platter for Shabbos lunch. When your guests arrive, you learn that one of them does not eat grilled food because of the carcinogens. You quickly run into the kitchen to remove the grilled pieces from the platter when your *frum* friend yells “בורר! You can't do that!” Is he right?

The *passkins* משני"ב that the same pieces of chicken cooked in different ways are considered "ב' מינים" – “two different types of food” and sorting the one you do not like from the one you like is forbidden.

- 16) Your *frum* friend is at your house for Shabbos lunch and asks for some water. You bring him water in a pitcher and say, “I didn’t bring the Brita filtering pitcher because of בורר”. Your *frum* friend tells you, “Stop being so *frum*! That’s not בורר!” Is he right?

The S”A *passkins* in סעיף י' that filtering wine/water from sediment is permitted because most people drink the wine/water together with the sediment, and the “mixture” is viewed as one entity – מין אחד. In other words, sorting a mixture is forbidden, but sorting one entity is considered splitting it in half and not sorting. The *passkins* ביה"ל ד"ה הואיל – איסטנים – a “*feinschmecker*” who would never drink unfiltered wine is not allowed to filter the wine because for him, the sediment is considered פסולת. It would seem that someone who never drinks unfiltered water is not allowed to use a Brita on Shabbos. Yet, **Rav Elyashiv** (28) writes that everyone would be allowed to use a Brita filter for two reasons. Firstly, the filtration of water in the Brita is not discernable; the water looks exactly the same before and after filtration. Secondly, the ביה"ל only forbade those who never drink unfiltered water, and today everyone drinks unfiltered water either when they are very thirsty, or at least when cooking.

- 17) Are you allowed to use a peeler on Shabbos to peel cucumbers? Tomatoes? Apples? Carrots?

The *Rama* in שכא-יט *passkins* that peeling the inedible peels of a garlic or an onion right before the meal is permitted. The ביה"ל explains that although you are removing the פסולת from the אוכל, it is allowed because there is no other way to get to the fruit and it is considered "דרך אכילה". With regard to the fruits/vegetables listed in the question, if their peels are considered one entity with the fruit itself then the laws of בורר do not apply because the peel and fruit are not considered a mixture. For those fruits/vegetables, you are even allowed to use a peeler to peel them and even well in advance of the meal (See שש"כ פ"ג-לד). For example, you are allowed to peel tomatoes, apples, pears, peaches and plums with a peeler well in advance of the meal because these peels are considered one entity with the fruit. However, if the peels are a separate entity and not usually eaten with the fruit/vegetable, then the laws of בורר apply where removing the peel is only permitted right before the meal and without the use of a כלי. Most *posskim* are of the opinion that a peeler is a כלי for ברירה, but the ילקוט יוסף writes that it is a glorified knife and in situations where you are allowed to peel right before the meal, you are also allowed to use a peeler. With regard to cucumbers and carrots, the ארחות שבת (32) writes that since most people do not eat them with their peel, their peel is more similar to the peel of a banana or orange where removing it is only permitted right before the meal and without a

peeler. It should be noted that **Ha'Gaon Rav Neventzal** says in the name of **RSZA** that peeling a cucumber with a peeler right before the meal is permitted.

- 18) You hate the chicken skin. Are you allowed to remove it for him before the meal? During the meal?

Rav Moshe (30), the **שש"כ**, and the **ילקוט יוסף** are of the opinion that since most people eat the chicken skin it is considered one entity with the chicken itself and the laws of **בורר** do not apply. Therefore, you are allowed to remove the skin well before the meal begins. However, if you would never eat the skin you have the status of an **אסטניס** where removing the skin is forbidden. The **ארחות שבת** (31) is of the opinion that in **ארץ ישראל** most people do not eat the chicken skin (unless the chicken is grilled) and removing the skin is only allowed right before the meal, just like the removal of the garlic peel or banana peel.

- 19) You are eating at your *frum* friend's house for Shabbos lunch and after everyone takes a bite of the challah, he is about to begin cutting the second one. As he is about to remove the sticker from the second challah, you yell "Gevalt! Shabbos! You can't do that; it's **בורר**!" He responds, "stop being so **מהמיר** all the time! It's allowed." Who is right?

Since the sticker is stuck to the challah it is considered a mixture, just like the peel of a fruit. Therefore, removing it is only permitted right before the meal. However, the **שש"כ** (34) writes that it is best to remove it after reciting **המוציא** to make sure that your challah stays whole for **להם משנה**. He also adds that it is best to remove some challah with the sticker to make sure that you do not rip the letters on the sticker.

- 20) For the first course, your *frum* friend serves cantaloupe slices. You look at him in bewilderment, saying: "I see the scrape marks of the spoon on the inside of the cantaloupe – you are not allowed to scrape out the pits, it's **בורר**!" "Stop making up *halachos*" he responds. Who is right?

The **שש"כ** (35) *passkins* that since there is no convenient way to eat the cantaloupe without first removing the seeds, the seeds are considered to be a form of a peel, where removing them right before the meal is permitted.

- 21) The next course comes out and everyone gets a whole Denise fish. Your *frum* friend takes his 8-year-old son's plate and removes all the bones from the fish and places them on his plate. You look at him in horror. "I don't think we can call you the "*frum* friend" anymore! That is real **בורר**! You are removing the **פסולת** from the **אוכל**!" Should we take away his title of the "*frum* friend"?

Rav Moshe (40) *passkins* that removing the bones from a fish to give to a child right before the meal is permitted because we rely on the **פמ"ג** who allows removing the bones when "אי אפשר בענין אחר" – "there is no other way" to do so. [For adults, the **ביה"ל** writes that it is best to either place the fish in your mouth and then remove the bones, hold the bones in place and pull the fish towards you (אוכל מתוך פסולת), or remove the bones with some fish meat on it and then suck off the fish from the bones.]

- 22) For dessert, watermelon is served. Your friend picks up a piece, takes a bite, and spits out the pits. You ask him: "Why don't you take the seeds out before you eat the watermelon?" "Because I am *frum*," he responds. What is the proper way to eat a watermelon on Shabbos?

Rav Moshe (40) and the **שש"כ** (39) write that it is best to bite into the watermelon and spit out the seeds (as is the case by an adult eating fish). However, if this is not possible, you are allowed to shake off the seeds or even remove them by hand right before you eat it. The reason this is permitted is because your actions are considered to be "דרך אכילה" (since they are done right before eating), and not "דרך בורר".

- 23) Part of your apple is spoiled. Are you allowed to cut the spoiled section off before eating it?

This is a מחלוקת between the **משנ"ב** and the **הזו"א** as quoted by the **ארחות שבת** (41). The **משנ"ב** writes that as long as you remove some of the good section along with the spoiled section, it is permitted. The reason is because the mixture is defined as the area where the spoiled part touches the good part, and you are removing the entire mixture. However, the **הזו"א** prohibits because you are fixing the rest of the apple, which constitutes **בורר** (sorting the bad from the good). Even the **הזו"א** agrees that if you cut off the spoiled part with a large chunk of the good part, it is not considered **בורר**. Rather, it just looks like you are splitting the apple in half.

- 24) The grapes you bought from the store on Friday are very dirty – there are small chunks of dirt in between many of the grapes. You are about to wash them when your daughter who just came back from seminary says, "Dad! Washing those grapes is **בורר**!" What is she talking about? Are you not allowed to wash fruit on Shabbos? What if you are walking in the park with your wife and the apple you are eating falls on the floor and is covered in dirt. Are you not allowed to wash it off?

Rav Moshe (43) writes that washing a dirty fruit/vegetable on Shabbos is permitted if done right before the meal because it is not different than removing an inedible peel from a fruit before eating it. Additionally, we do not view the cleaning as an act of **ברירה**, but as an act of washing. The **שש"כ** (44) also *passkins* that washing a single fruit/vegetable covered in dirt is permitted because removing the dirt that is stuck on the fruit is similar

to removing a peel from a fruit. However, if there is a mixture of fruit and dirt, as is the case with the dirty grapes in the question where the dirt is not stuck onto the fruit but equally dispersed among the grapes, washing them is forbidden because you are removing the פסולת from אוכל.

- 25) You are hooked on coffee and cannot start your day without some morning joe. The problem is you are a *feinschmecker* and only drink freshly brewed coffee. Is there an issue of בורר when preparing filtered “pour over” coffee or with the use of a French Press?

Based on the S”A in ט' סעיף ט', there is no issue of בורר when making pour over coffee. The משנ”ב סקל”ג explains that since the water entering the filter is clean and nothing needs to be filtered from it, there is no prohibition of בורר. (There is a separate issue of בישול – cooking the ground coffee, see notes for details.) The use of a French Press is forbidden because the coffee grounds are mixed throughout the cup and you are actively filtering them out of the coffee when you push the plunger down. If the coffee ground settled on the bottom of the cup, you are allowed to push down the filter since you are pushing the filter through clear coffee. However, this is not advised as you might push it a bit too far and accidentally push down some of the coffee ground that has not completely settled.

- 26) Since you are properly learning הלכות בורר, you view everything through the eyes of בורר. When you are washing the dishes Friday night, you yell in horror, “I am transgressing בורר! The sink has a filter to prevent the drain from clogging up! How am I allowed to wash dishes on Shabbos?” What does your smart wife tell you?

The שש”כ (50) *passkins* that there is no issue of בורר with the use of a sink filter. Your only intention when using the filter is to ensure that your drain does not clog, and separating the large pieces from the liquid is not considered בורר, since the Rama in סעיף ג' taught that with one מין there is no prohibition of ברירה when separating the large pieces from the small ones. Here, too, since you also throw out the large pieces of waste caught in the sink’s filter, all the waste is considered one מין of פסולת, where separating the small pieces from the larger ones is permitted.

- 27) You open a yogurt for your child, but he refuses to eat it because of the liquid floating on top. Are you allowed to tilt the yogurt so the liquid spills out in the sink?

According to the שש”כ (53), the excess juice that is well above the yogurt is not considered mixed with the food, and may be removed. But the liquid that is right above the yogurt is considered mixed with the food and may not be removed. However, if you pour out a little bit of yogurt with the juice it is permitted based on the משנ”ב’s understanding of the ט”ז. **Rav Ovadya** in (ח”ד-עמ' רכט-רלא) חזון עובדיה argues holding that you are always allowed to pour out the excess water because the water is always easily distinguishable from the yogurt and they are not considered a mixture.

- 28) You made a delicious chicken soup filled with matzah balls and many different types of vegetables for the Shabbos night meal. Your guest requests to only have the soup and some chicken. But when you place the ladle in the pot, you accidentally pick up a carrot with the chicken. Are you allowed to shake the carrot out? What if you took too much liquid, are you allowed to spill the liquid out?

If the pieces of vegetable in the soup are very large and not considered mixed with the soup (as is the case with pickles in pickle juice), you are allowed to shake off the carrot or the excess soup. However, if the pieces are small and considered mixed with the soup and other vegetables, then shaking off the carrot or the extra soup is forbidden because you are removing the פסולה from the אוכל. In such a situation you have two options: A) Pour out the entire ladle and try again. B) Give the carrot/excess soup to a different person who wants it because for him it is considered "אוכל".

- 29) On Shabbos morning, you realize that you do not have matching socks – they are all in the dryer. You open the dryer door (#SCP-Muktzah) and see all the dried clothing mixed together. Are you allowed to move the clothing you do not want to one side of the dryer in order to be able to look for your socks deeper in the pile?

The ארזות שבת (54) *passkins* that removing פסולה from אוכל is only forbidden if you completely remove the פסולה from the אוכל, but if you just move the פסולה to a different side of the mixture, it is permitted. Therefore, you are allowed to move the clothing you do not need to one side of the dryer in order to find the socks you are looking for.

- 30) You wish to take two full matzos for לחם משנה on Shabbos *Chol Ha'moed* Pesach. Are you allowed to remove the broken matzos on top of the box in order to access the full ones?

RSZA (55) goes one step beyond the ארזות שבת (in the previous question) and says that removing the פסולה from the אוכל is forbidden only if you completely removed it and put it down. However, you are allowed to temporarily “remove” the פסולה if it is still in your hand and you plan on immediately returning it to the mixture. Therefore, you are allowed to remove the top broken *matzos* if you do not put them down and plan on immediately returning them to the box.

- 31) Your wife made delicious mashed potatoes and cake for the Shabbos meal. Right before the meal, you accidentally spilled the sprinkles container (used for the cake) into the mashed potatoes. Without thinking you quickly remove all the sprinkles when your wife says “בורר! You can’t remove the sprinkles!” Are you allowed to eat the mashed potatoes if you violated בורר on them? Would it help if you quickly remix the sprinkles with the mash potatoes?

The **ד"ה הבורר** quotes the **פמ"ג** who says that you are not allowed to benefit from food that was fixed through sorting since benefiting from any **מלאכה** that transpired on Shabbos is forbidden. However, the **ל"ה** writes that in a **בדיעבד** situation, we can rely on the **גר"א** who holds that if the transgression happened **בשוגג** – unintentionally, everyone is allowed to benefit from it on Shabbos (even the transgressor). Therefore, if the mashed potatoes are not crucial for the meal, you should not eat them (since they were refined through the transgression of **בורר** when the **פסולה** was removed from the **אוכל**). The **קצות** **השלהן** (56) adds that even returning the sprinkles to the mashed potatoes will not help since the food became intrinsically forbidden when **בורר** was transgressed.