



Parshas Pekudei 5763

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Is one permitted to wash fruit on Shabbos, which is in effect removing dirt etc from the fruit?

The *Shulchan Aruch*¹ tells us that one is forbidden to soak *karshinim*² that are mixed with peels and other refuse in water, which action will separate the *karshinim* from the peels. The *Mishna Berura*³ adds that it is similarly forbidden to pour water over potatoes etc in order to clean them of their soil particles.

This implies that one is forbidden to wash fruit and vegetables on Shabbos.

Many *poskim* want to differentiate between soaking in water and washing fruit under running water.

Rav Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל⁴ presents a few reasons why washing fruit is permissible. 1. When dirt covers the fruit, one may wash it off prior to eating just as one is permitted to peel garlic and onions prior to consumption. 2. In many cases people eat fruit or vegetables without washing these items and in such cases the dirt is not considered *p'soles* at all.

Rav Moshe concludes that perhaps only soaking in water is considered *דרך ברירה* but washing with water is not.

Did the Mishna Berura not say that it is not permitted to pour water over potatoes as well?

True, he did, and we can say that he also means that the water is being used as a separator and not as a cleaner, for example: it is forbidden to place potatoes etc inside a bowl and run water into the bowl where the water would separate between the food and the dirt. This is how the *קצות השולחן*⁵ explains the *M"B*, because he also understands that it is obvious that washing fruit the way we usually do is not called *borer* at all but rather it is compared to peeling fruit, which is permitted prior to consumption.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach זצ"ל is also of the opinion that washing fruit the way we do has nothing to do with the case of the *Shulchan Aruch*.⁶

Undoubtedly, if it is possible to wash the fruit before Shabbos one should do so. Once washed before Shabbos and one wants to wash the fruit again on Shabbos for added cleanliness (and the fruit are still clean) one may do so.

Other *poskim*⁷ are not so lenient and do not differentiate between soaking and washing and therefore require that all dirty fruit should be washed before Shabbos unless it is fruit that most people would consume without washing beforehand.

¹ *Simon* 319:8.

² A type of animal food.

³ *Simon* 319:29.

⁴ אג"מ או"ח ח"א סי' קכ"ה.

⁵ R' Chaim Na'ach, in *simon* 125 footnote 16.

⁶ *SS"K* chapter 3 footnote

⁷ See תשובות והנהגות ח"א סי' רי"א.

Am I permitted to pour out the oil that lies atop the tuna in a can of tuna fish, or must I remove the tuna together with the oil?

We will begin with the simple case. The oil sitting atop the tuna fish is not mixed with the fish and hence its separation is not *borer*. Therefore one may pour out the oil that is above the tuna fish.

To pour out all the oil, or at least as much as possible is forbidden, even when performed prior to consumption, because one is pouring out the *p'soles* from the *ochel*.

The more innovative case is when one wishes to pour off surplus oil and requires some oil to remain. Rav Moshe Feinstein,⁸ when asked a similar question, replied that if one wishes to pour out excess soup so that some soup will remain with vegetables it is permitted, as long as one does not pour out all the soup.

Here too, since one wants some oil to remain with the tuna, one has not really separated between the two. (Although we know that removing one stone from flour is forbidden even though other stones remain, the reason being is because a stone is an absolute *p'soles* whereas two types of food which we want to remain together are not labeled as *p'soles* unless we require their total separation).

This *halacha* applies itself to many cases and one must take care not to pour out juices etc from foods.

The sweater I need is in the middle of a pile of sweaters, am I permitted to remove the top ones in order to reach the sweater I need?

The *Mishna Berura*⁹ teaches us that one may move sweaters etc out of the way in order to reach a sweater located somewhere in the middle of the pile if required for immediate use. This is true for a pile of clothes on a

chair next to one's bed when one is looking for an article of clothing somewhere in the middle. The *chidush* is that we do not say that when actually removing the outer layer one has already "separated" between the items and liable for *Borer*. On the other hand, one may not remove dirt from a mixture and say that he is merely doing so to reach the mixture, because by actually removing the dirt one is separating between *p'soles* and *ochel*.

Vort on the Parsha

The possuk says ויקם משה (40:18) that Moshe raised the Mishkan. The Midrash Tanchumah says that neither Betzalel nor Aholiav could raise the Mishkan because of its great weight. Hashem said to Moshe, "you demonstrate as though you are raising the Mishkan and I will lift it for you". The lesson is that even though the Mishkan was lifted through a miracle, since Moshe Rabeinu did his utmost to accomplish the feat on his own, it is attributed to Moshe as if he really did achieve it single-handedly. One should never surrender and say that a certain Mitzvah is above one's capabilities. When necessary Hashem will provide the required support and one might succeed far above human expectations.

Food For Thought

- *Removing ochel from p'soles is a precondition of Borer, how long before eating or using may it be done?*
- *May the housewife set the table and then go to shul?*
- *When many guests are attending the meal, may I separate for all of them?*
- *What if that separating will take 2 hours?*

Answers coming next week.

⁸ אג"מ ח"ד סי' ע"ד בורר א'.

⁹ *Bi'ur Halacha* se'if 3 'le'echol.

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Note: The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive p'sak.