

Food Preparation on Shabbos:

Part 8 - “Sechita” - Extracting Liquids:

A. The Prohibition:

1. One of the 39 prohibited activities is called “Dash” - threshing- a process by which wheat kernels are extracted from their surrounding chaff.
2. A derivative of this is “Sechita” - extracting liquid from an item in which it is absorbed.
3. Sechita applies to wringing liquid from a fabric as well as extracting liquids from foods.
4. It is forbidden to press fruits or vegetables in order to extract their juices.
5. It is forbidden to squeeze out liquid that has been absorbed in any food item (e.g. wine absorbed in Challah)

B. Squeezing Fruits, Vegetables, & Extracting Liquids Absorbed in Foods:

1. Olives & Grapes

- I. Is Biblically prohibited because the ultimate use of these fruits are in their liquid form.

2. Other Foods Commonly Juiced

- I. Are Rabbinically prohibited because the juices of these foods are not in their ultimate form, yet they are commonly squeezed to produce juices.
- II. Examples: oranges, apples, lemons, grapefruits, pineapples, tomatoes.
- III. It is forbidden to squeeze lemon directly into tea.
- IV. You may cut a slice of lemon and place it in the tea. However, you may not press the lemon with a spoon against the side of the cup even while it is fully immersed in the tea.
- V. It is forbidden to squeeze lemons directly into water to make lemonade.
- VI. Since the prohibition is Rabbinic, there are allowances for certain exceptions.

3. Foods That Are Not Usually Juiced

- I. Is except from the prohibition.
- II. These may be pressed even with specific intent of extracting their juices.
- III. Examples: melons (all examples depend on contemporary practice)

4. Extracting Liquids Absorbed in Foods

- I. Is Rabbinically prohibited
- II. Since the prohibition is Rabbinic, there are allowances for certain exceptions.

C. Conditions Under Which Sechita is Permitted: (when items are Rabbinically prohibited - no leniencies with olives & grapes)

1. To Enhance the Food

- I. It is permitted to squeeze liquid out of a food in order to enhance its flavour.

- II. e.g. one is permitted to squeeze excess oil out of a can of tuna or sauce from a kugel (but must be done immediately prior to eating)

2. **Squeezing Liquids onto Solid Foods**

- I. When the liquid is being used to flavour the food
- II. Most of the liquid is absorbed by the food
- III. It is forbidden to squeeze a liquid into another liquid even for flavouring
 - One may squeeze lemon juice directly onto fish
 - One may not squeeze lemon juice into tea
 - One may squeeze lemon juice onto a spoonful of sugar, provided that most of the juice is absorbed by the sugar. The mixture may then be stirred into the tea.
 - One may squeeze lemons onto a spoonful of sugar, provided that most of the juice is absorbed by the sugar. The mixture may then be stirred into water.

3. **Sucking**

- I. Sucking is not considered a form of sechita.
- II. One may hold a wedge of an orange or lemon and suck out its juice.
- III. One may dip challah in wine and suck it. (Be careful to avoid squeezing out any liquid with one's hand)
- IV. One is prohibited to suck olives and grapes while holding them, but may place them in one's mouth and suck out the juice while the fruit is inside the mouth.

D. **Juices That Oozed Out: (Is Rabbinically prohibited)**

1. **Olives & Grapes**

- I. Oil that seeped from olives and juice that oozed from grapes on Shabbos may not be consumed until after Shabbos

2. **Other Foods Commonly Juiced**

- I. This prohibition applies only to those fruits and vegetables that were originally intended for juicing.
- II. A fruit which was purchased for eating is not prohibited.
- III. e.g. An orange / lemon purchased for juicing is subject to this prohibition. If one decides to eat an orange and cuts it open on Shabbos, he is prohibited from drinking any juice that trickles onto the plate.
- IV. If the orange / lemon was purchased for eating, the juice that trickles onto the plate may be consumed.
- V. When eating grapefruit, one must refrain from deliberately squeezing the grapefruit with a spoon to draw out its juice.
- VI. If the grapefruit was originally purchased for eating, any juice which oozes out while eating may be consumed.

3. **Foods Which Are Not Commonly Juiced**

- I. These foods are exempt from this prohibition. Any juice which oozes from these foods on Shabbos may be consumed.
- II. You are permitted to consume juice that seeps out of a melon while eating.

NOTE: Even when squeezing is permitted, one may not squeeze with an instrument that is used for the purpose of squeezing (e.g. hand juicer), as it looks like a weekday activity.

Part 9 - Wringing & Laundering:

A. Wringing Liquid From a Fabric:

1. The Prohibitions

- I. Torah Prohibition: Wringing out a fabric in order to salvage the liquid (e.g. for washing) is “Sechita”, whose purpose is to acquire the liquid.
- II. Torah Prohibition: Wringing out a fabric in order to cleanse it is “Kibus” - laundering, whose purpose is to improve the quality of the fabric by expelling the liquid.
- III. Rabbinic Prohibition: Wringing / squeezing out a fabric even with neither of these intentions, even if the liquid will go to waste and the fabric will not be cleansed.

2. Materials to Which “Sechita” Applies

- I. Biblical Prohibition: Applies to truly absorbent fibres: wool, cotton, linen, sponge, and paper towels.
- II. Rabbinic Prohibition: non absorbent fibers which trap the liquids between the fibres: steel wool
- III. Permitted: Articles that do not absorb or trap liquid. e.g. 1) nylon bottle brush whose bristles are widely spaced apart and do not trap water, 2) synthetic scouring pads whose fibres are widely spaced apart and do not trap water
- IV. Permitted: Non-absorbent materials such as leather or plastic

3. Saturating a Fabric

- I. Rabbinically prohibited to saturate any fabric that one might be inclined to wring out. e.g. sponge, mop, garment
- II. This prohibition does not apply to rags and similar articles (e.g. paper towels), which people generally do not wring out.
- III. The Rabbinic prohibition only applies to truly absorbent materials, which are subject to Biblical Sechita.
- IV. No prohibition to materials which merely trap water, and only subject to Rabbinic Sechita.

4. Practical Applications

I. Washing Dishes

- It is forbidden to use a sponge, washcloth, paper towel or other absorbent item, because water will inevitably be wrung out while washing.

- It is forbidden to use synthetic scouring pads and steel wool pads, which trap water between the fibres.
- It is permitted to use a synthetic pad whose fibres are widely spaced and can not trap water.
- It is permitted to use a nylon bottle brush.

II. Wiping Up Spills

- It is best not to wipe up a large spill, but only to blot the spill with a rag or paper towels.
- It is prohibited to use a sponge, mop, or a garment, since one might wring these articles out.
- A towel is permitted, as they will not bother wringing out the towel, since one can use a washing machine.
- One may blot dirty, sticky, or smelly liquid spills with any garment (but not a sponge or mop), as it is unlikely one would wring the garment out afterward.
- The prohibition of saturating does not apply to wiping coloured liquids with garments. However, it is best to avoid using towels or garments because of the prohibition of dying. Preferably, these spills should be blotted with rags or paper towels, as colour is not significant on these materials. A towel may be used, if no garments or rags are available.

III. Cleaning a Dirty Surface

- It is forbidden to rub a dirty surface with a wet rag or any other wet material, because, while cleaning, water will be squeezed from the rag.
- A damp rag, from which water cannot be wrung, may be used.

IV. Cleaning a Wet Surface

- An area which is slightly wet may be cleaned with a dry rag.
- An extremely wet area may not be cleaned with a dry rag, as the saturated water will be squeezed out.
- One must use discretion, for the amount of water needed to saturate varies from item to item. One should not wipe or scrub a wet surface unless certain that no Sechita will occur.

NOTE: A Sponge may not be used at all on Shabbos. Sponges are also Muktzah.

B. “Kibus” - Laundering: (all methods are prohibited, any one of the following steps)

1. **“Shirya” - Soaking**

- I. Biblical Prohibition: To soak or saturate a stained fabric in water or other cleaning agents. Pouring water on a stain is also forbidden.
- II. This prohibition only applies to absorbent materials such as wool, cotton, linen, etc. The rule for these materials is *“Soaking is by itself, a form of laundering.”*
- III. Leather, plastic, and other non-absorbent materials are exempt from this prohibition, since these materials can not be substantially cleaned by merely soaking in water.

IV. One is prohibited from pouring water on a soiled linen tablecloth.

V. One is permitted to pour water on a plastic tablecloth.

2. **“Shifshuf” - Scrubbing**

I. Biblical Prohibition: To scrub any wet (or dry) fabric or to rub two parts of the fabric against each other.

II. This stage of laundering is prohibited with all materials whether absorbent or not.

III. Although one is permitted to wet a plastic table cloth, one may not scrub it while wet, neither with one's hands nor with an implement.

IV. With plastic, one may brush lightly to loosen the dirt. Only rubbing forcefully is prohibited.

V. With absorbent fabrics, even rubbing lightly is forbidden.

NOTE: This prohibition only applies to soft materials, not to hard surfaces such as wood.

3. **“Sechita” - Wringing**

I. Biblical Prohibition: to wring out any absorbent fabric for the purpose of cleansing it, because wringing is the final step of the laundering process.

II. Rabbinical Prohibition: Even if you do not intend to cleanse the fabric.

4. **Practical Applications:**

I. Cleaning a Stained Tablecloth

- Tablecloths made of absorbent fibres (e.g. linen) may not be moistened at all.
- Plastic and Vinyl Tablecloths may be wet and rubbed lightly to loosen the dirt, but not scrubbed forcefully, even with one's hand.

II. Cleaning a Stained Carpet

- one may not pour water on a stained carpet
- The same rule applies to garments, and for chairs or couches covered with fabric.

III. Leather

- Leather may be moistened.
- One may also rub its surface lightly to loosen dirt.
- Scrubbing is prohibited.

IV. Cleaning a Hard Surface

- The prohibition of laundering does not apply to hard surfaces (e.g. wood, tile)
- One may wet and scrub a kitchen counter, but only with a non-absorbent material (e.g. a rubber scraper)

V. Major Spill on Tablecloth with Candlesticks on the Table

- Removal of tablecloth, which is not Muktzah, by holding the candlesticks, without moving them.
- Put on a new tablecloth, by tilting the candlestick indirectly.