

Borer - Sorting:

A. Definition and categories of Borer:

- 1 Borer can be defined as sorting. i.e. taking out one variety from another. Even selecting a single item from mixture is forbidden.
- 2 One violates Borer on a biblical level in one of three ways. The common factor between all of them is that such is the normal way Borer is done during the weekday.
 - 1 Separating ***refuse from food*** is a violation of Borer. Even if one takes the food with one's hands with intent to eat the food immediately, one still violates Borer on a Biblical level.
 - 2 Separating with a ***utensil*** used for separating such as a strainer or a sieve is a violation of Borer. Even if one takes the food from the refuse for immediate use, nonetheless, one violates Borer on a Biblical level.
 - 3 Separating to eat the food ***after some time***. Even if one separates with one's hands the food from the refuse, one still violates Borer on a Biblical level.

B. The permitted way to separate:

- 1 In order to permit selecting, one must fulfill ***all*** of the following three conditions:
 - 1 You must separate what you want - "***Ochel***" from what you don't want - "***Pisoles***".
 - 2 You must separate with one's hand.
 - 3 You must separate for immediate use or just prior to a meal (the amount of time it takes to prepare the food).

C. Separating for other people:

- 1 One is permitted to separate for other people (even if you are not eating the food) as long as one does it for immediate use, with one's hand, and food from the refuse.

- 2 One is permitted to separate for guests (or peel fruits) enough food that it should be presentable even if one knows that not all of the food will be eaten.
- 3 It's permitted to separate for animals as long as it's for immediate use, with one's hand, and one separates the food from the refuse.

D. Clarification of the first condition:

- 1 It's permissible to remove all the refuse together with a piece of a good food (e.g. removing a fly from a drink/soup). Nonetheless, some are strict and require that one should make sure that one remove a substantial amount of good together with the bad.
- 2 If one has food in one's mouth one may remove what you don't want from what you want. (e.g. Watermelon seeds.)
- 3 If a food has a peel that covers it entirely one may remove the part that's unwanted (peel) from the part that's desired (fruit), however this action must be done right before the meal and with one's hand.
- 4 Where it's impossible to separate the food from the waste it's permissible to take out the waste. For example, one who cuts open a cantaloupe may scoop out the seeds and leave the fruit.

E. Taking refuse from the food:

- 1 It is forbidden to separate by taking the refuse from the food. It is forbidden even when it's done with **one** hand.
- 2 One violates Borer by taking the refuse from the food even if one only separated a portion of the refuse and didn't complete the separation.
- 3 It's forbidden to separate refuse from food even if the refuse is slightly edible.

F. Taking a desired food from an undesired one:

- 1 If there are two foods that are mixed and one wants one to eat one now and not the other, the one he wants to eat is called the 'food' and the unwanted one is called the 'refuse' and so it is forbidden to take the unwanted one from the other.
- 2 For example, if almonds and walnuts are mixed, and one only intends to eat the almonds, one may take the almonds from the mixture but not the walnuts.

G. Separating two foods to be used for later:

- 1 If there are two foods (meaning both are desired for use) there's a dispute whether one is allowed to separate for later use. Ashkenazim should be strict and Sephardim may be lenient.
- 2 It's permissible to separate a food that's not desired now but desired for later ***in the same meal*** from another food that is desired right now.(e.g. removing rice from the soup it is in, to be eaten later)

H. Examples:

- 1 It's permissible to remove a sticker, label, or foil stuck to challah, as long as it is done right before eating.
- 2 One may remove honeydew or other melon seeds which are concentrated in the center of the fruit if done right before eating.
- 3 A knife isn't considered a vessel designated for borer and may be used to peel.
- 4 One may remove a stem from a fruit right before eating.
- 5 It's permissible to crack a nut with a nutcracker. (The nutcracker just breaks the shell, but does not complete the separation)
- 6 If a candy wrapper got stuck to the candy, one should only remove the wrapper right before eating.

I. Peeling:

- 1 It is permissible to remove an inedible shell or peel from a food as long as it's done by hand and immediately prior to eating. Examples include:
 - eggshells
 - onion peel
 - potato peel
 - banana peel
 - sausages peel
 - melon peel
 - peanut shell

J. Clarification of the second condition:

- 1 It's forbidden to use a 1) sieve 2) strainer 3) colander 4) perforated spoon 5) apple corer
- 2 A utensil like a fork is permissible if it's used as an extension to one's hand, meaning it's used not to get one's hands dirty or in order to pick up a liquid but it doesn't help one separate any better than if one did it with one's hands. Some Sephardic authorities permit using such a utensil under all circumstances.
- 3 Some say that using a peeler is an issue of using a tool designated for Borer, and is prohibited to use. Others permit using it when the peel is edible. Others permit a peeler under all circumstances.

K. Clarification of the third condition:

- 1 It is only permitted to separate with intent to eat the food immediately, while it's forbidden to separate with intent to eat the food after some time even within the same day.
- 2 Separating before a meal for the time it takes to prepare the meal is considered separating for immediate use. For example if it takes one half hour to prepare for the meal one

may separate only within a half hour of the meal. One may not separate and then take a few minute break before the meal.

- 3 Separating right before a meal is permissible even if one will only eat the food later in the meal which may be after several hours. However, separating to eat food after the meal or in another meal is forbidden.
- 4 Some say that the time limit for separating food from other food has a longer time period than separating food from waste, however, ***Ashkenazim shouldn't rely on this, and Sephardim shouldn't rely on this unless there's a great need.***
- 5 If one separated in order to eat immediately and then changed his mind and decided not to eat, some say that he violated Borer, while others say it's permissible after the fact, therefore one should avoid such a situation. ***Ashkenazim are lenient, while Sefardim are strict.***
6. A selection may be made prior to immediate use only if the immediate use is the primary purpose of that object. For example, one may not sort different mixed foods before storing them in the refrigerator as storing food is the primary use of food. Similarly, one may not remove the shell of an egg before continuing in the process of making egg salad if one doesn't intend to eat the egg salad immediately after it's made.

L. Alternative ways to permit Borer:

- 1 One may throw all of the items of a mixture onto a table or on the ground so that they scatter. Once the items are separate identifiable units it is permitted to use each one separately without any prohibition of Borer.(e.g. silverware)
- 2 Taking off a piece of food (wanted part) along with the non-wanted food is permitted. (e.g. Fly in Liquid)

M. What constitutes a mixture?

- 1 A group of identical items isn't considered a mixture and may be separated without violating borer.(e.g. It is permitted to separate pieces of fish by size since it's all one type of food.)
- 2 However, if there's a difference in the species, taste, function, or quality in the foods the group of items is considered a mixture.
- 3 The following are examples of groups that constitute a mixture being that the items are different in some of the above respects:
 - 1 cooked and baked apples have different tastes
 - 2 boiled and roasted chicken have different tastes
 - 3 soup spoon and teaspoon have different functions
 - 4 kitchen and table knife have different functions
 - 5 large and small plates have different functions
 - 6 spoons and forks have different functions
 - 7 matzah meal and matzah chunks have different functions
- 4 Something as having a different qualities if the undesired one is eaten only out of necessity
 - 1 fresh and spoiled grapes have different qualities
 - 2 cooked and burnt meats have different qualities
- 5 If only part of the fruit is a spoiled, one may remove that fruit from a mixture of good fruits. However, an altogether rotten fruit may not be removed from a mixture of good fruits.
- 6 In a group of items of different sizes or colors, the difference in size or color doesn't make it a mixture unless it changes it's function.(e.g. chunks of matzo and matzo meal may not be separated)
- 7 One may take items from a mixture of two different types but should be careful not to separate the different types by size. For example, one shouldn't assort a basket of apples and pears by separating by size.

- 8 One may separate different items some of which are more aesthetically pleasing from others which are less aesthetically pleasing as long as both objects are equally usable.

N. What type of arrangement is considered a mixture?

- 1 There's three possible arrangement of mixtures. 1) A mixture can consist of disparate objects that are near each other. 2) A mixture is formed when there's items attached to one another. 3) Items on top of one another also form a mixture.
- 2 However, if the items are readily distinguishable because of a clear and striking difference of consistency or structure, are not considered a mixture. For example, meatballs in sauce is not a mixture.

O. Items that are close:

- 1 A group of objects are considered a mixture if the individual items lose their identity as individuals and the items are seen as a group and not individuals. This includes examples such as
 - 1 beans, barley, potato, and meat in a chulent,
 - 2 mixed nuts in a bowl,
 - 3 spliced fruit in a bowl
 - 4 pile of utensils
 - 5 platter of different types of deli
 - 6 platter of different types of cakes
- 2 The greater amount of objects in a concentrated area makes the items form a mixture. The larger the objects the more items that are needed in order for the items to lose their identity.
- 3 If the group of objects is possibly a mixture and it's unclear, we're strict to consider it a mixture not to do borer.
- 4 A totally rotten fruit among good fruits constitutes a mixture and so one may not remove a good fruit if one doesn't intend to eat it immediately. However, one may remove a fruit that's surrounding the fruit that's adjacent to the rotten fruit.

P. Attached items:

- 1 Items that are attached are considered a mixture. This includes the following examples:
 - 1 fat attached to meat
 - 2 peels on fruits
 - 3 shells on nuts or eggs
 - 4 a damaged part of a fruit to the fruit
 - 5 the pit of the fruit to the flesh of the fruit
- 2 It's permissible to separate the items that are attached except at the junction of their connection (as opposed to close items where even the outer items may not be separated). For example, it's permissible to cut away fat on meat if one leaves a sliver of the fat attached to the meat.

Q. Stacked items:

- 1 If items are piled on top of one another, they are considered a mixture even if each item is individually recognizable. This includes the following examples:
 - 1 different type of plates (or sizes) in a stack
 - 2 towels or clothes in a pile
- 2 It's permissible to remove unwanted top items in order to reach a wanted item on bottom of the mixture.

R. Separating non-food items:

1. It's forbidden to separate a mixture of non-food items such as clothes or utensils. According to Sephardim some say that one may be lenient. (e.g. sorting silverware)
2. One may not remove a drink bottle from a refrigerator where the bottles are jumbled together except for immediate use of drinking (or taking it out to lose its chill and then drink).
3. Ideally, one should eat all the food that was separated in preparation for the meal, however, if there are leftovers of food that was separated for the meal or one changed one's mind not to eat, the food may be eaten later on Shabbos.

4. It's forbidden to sort a mixed group of cutlery to put them into separate compartments. Similarly, it's forbidden to pick out items of a certain variety, dry them and then place them back in their compartment.
5. However, it is permitted to take one cutlery at a time, dry it and then place it in its compartment.
6. Certainly, it's permissible to sort cutlery even from a mixture so that one can set the table for the meal that's going to start immediately after sorting the cutlery.
7. Cutlery of different kind (knife, spoon, fork) and of different functions (cutlery for dairy and cutlery for meat, a serving spoon and a regular spoon) constitute a mixture.

S. Borer by Mistake:

- 1 If one took an object from a mixture with intent to eat it and it turns out to be undesirable one didn't violate Borer. For example, if one takes a fruit from a mixture with intent to eat it and it turns out that it's rotten one didn't do Borer.

T. Natural Borer:

- 1 It's permitted to cause a mixture to separate naturally if the borer would have occurred naturally anyway without your interference. For example, it's permitted to turn a bottle upright even though it'll cause the sediment to fall to the bottom since that would have occurred anyway.

U. Practical Applications:

Fish or meat bones

- 1 When preparing or eating fish or meat one must be careful not to separate the bones from the meat. One should eat the fish and spit out or remove the bones from one's mouth after one separated the bones from the meat. If that's not practical or convenient, one should hold the bone and eat the meat, hold the bone (with one's knife or hand) and cut away the

meat, or to remove each bone and suck it. If none of those are possible, one should remove the bones with a bit of meat attached.

- 2 Some have the practice to remove the bones from fish or meat in the normal way, and they have what to rely on, however it may only be done in the course of eating.
- 3 One shouldn't remove bare bones from one's plate when there's other foods right next to it, rather they should be left as is on the plate.

Chicken Skin

It is permissible to remove chicken skin from chicken right before eating. However, grilled chicken skin may be removed even not before eating. (it is considered part of the food)

Watermelon

1. Regarding watermelon seeds, according to Ashkenazim one should eat the melon and spit out the seeds. If that's difficult, one may shake off the seeds right before eating, and remove those that remain with one's hand right before eating. According to Sephardim, one initially may shake off the seeds and then remove those that don't come off.
2. Those who remove watermelon seeds right before eating watermelon have whom to rely on.

Fruit pits

- 1 One may remove a pit from a fruit when the pit doesn't come away from the fruit clean without taking away part of the fruit. For example, plums and peaches have pits that may be removed since when you remove the pit the flesh of the fruit comes with it.
- 2 However, one may not take the pit of a fruit if the pit will come clean without any of the flesh of the fruit, rather one should open the fruit and have the pit drop out, or take the fruit off the pit (and not the reverse). Some permit the removal of the pit even from such fruits if it's done right before eating.

Benchers

- 1 Taking a particular bencher from a pile is considered Borer unless it fulfills the requirements of taking the food from refuse for immediate use with one's hand.

Filtering tap water on Shabbat

- 1 If the tap water is drinkable without filtering it is permissible to filter it.

Cluster of grapes

- 1 If there are rotten grapes among good grapes, one should eat the good grapes and leave the rotten ones and not remove the rotten ones to make the cluster presentable for guests.

Other examples

1. One must check lettuce to make sure that there's no bugs on it. One may remove a large insect such as a caterpillar, however it's preferable to take it off with a piece of lettuce. However, a small insect may not be removed unless one takes a piece of the lettuce with it.
2. One should use a spoon to remove a teabag from a cup of tea, so that the drips of tea absorbed in the teabag aren't separated from the teabag.
3. If a tea kettle has a mixture of tea and tea leaves and at the spout of the kettle there is a mesh wiring that separate out the leaves, one may pour from the kettle as long as the tea leaves have settled to the bottom of the pot and aren't being separated from the liquid going through the spout. However, once the flow comes to a trickle one shouldn't pour from the kettle because in doing so one would be separating the tea from the tea leaves using a strainer.
4. One may not remove peas from the pod as this violates the melacha of threshing (Dosh) unless the pod is also edible.
5. One may remove a grape from the bunch (or bananas from a bunch) as long as it's done right before eating and the bunch is already cut from the vine.

6. In a fruit bowl, one may remove a grape sitting on top of a plum in order to eat the plum, however if the top grape is rotten, it's forbidden to remove it, rather one may spill out the whole bowl and pick out the plum.
7. One may not strain fruit juice from pulp (the fruit's flesh) if either most people in the world are particular to have juice strained or the particular person straining it is particular.
8. One may wash off grapes if one is only doing so for cleanliness, however, one may not do so if one's intention is to remove some unwanted substance it is forbidden.
9. Ice cubes or large objects (lemon slices) are not considered part of drink, and liquid may be poured from a pitcher, while the spout prevents the cubes / objects from escaping.
10. Oil may be squeezed from tuna for immediate use only.