

What is considered “immediately”?

We rule that the *halakha* is that one must select **just before eating or just before a meal**. Even if the selecting is for the purpose of dessert, one may conclude the selecting just before the beginning of the meal, even though two hours may pass until he will eat dessert (in accordance with **Rabbeinu Ḥananel**, as cited by **Rema 319:1**).

Therefore, one may select just before the meal even if the meal lasts several hours, and it is permitted to begin the selecting in accordance with the amount of food that one needs to select. One must take into account the time that it would take to conclude the preparations for the meal. Therefore, one must begin the preparations so that they will be finished a short while before the meal, as everyone typically leaves a certain margin of error in the preparation of food.

If several preparations are necessary for the meal, it is preferable to leave for last the selecting, e.g., peeling eggs or removing other peels that are not typically eaten (and ideally, even peels that are typically eaten), setting the silverware if it is intermingled, or the like. But if there is some reason to prepare the food for the meal in a different order, one may do so, even though it will result in the selecting not being performed just before the meal, as it is reasonable to say that all the preparations for the meal are considered a single unit (*Eil Meshulash* 8, note 22, citing Rav Karelitz) (pp. 848–858).

Is it permitted to select more than necessary?

If one selected for immediate consumption and ate part of the selected item, they are **not required to finish it all** (*Mishna Berura* 319:5). But if one employed artifice and intentionally selected more than was needed for that meal, they are liable to bring a sin-offering (*Mishna Berura* 319:5, based on the *Tur*). Nevertheless, it is permitted to select a large amount if it is conceivable that one will use it, and in the opinion of the *Ben Ish Hai* (Year 2, *Beshalah* 3; *Rav Pe'alim* 1, *Orah Hayim* 12), one who **selects for guests** is permitted to select an amount greater than they are expected to eat, in deference to the guests (pp. 859–862).

Selecting while eating: In what manner may one eat fish with bones?

The authorities disagreed whether it is permitted to remove waste from food **while eating**. The *Beur Halakha* (319:4, s.v. *haborer pesolet*) understands the opinion of the **Ramban** and the **Ran to be** that it is

permitted to remove waste from food immediately before putting the food into one's mouth, as that is the **manner of eating** it. The *Ben Ish Hai* (Year 2, *Beshalah* 10) too rules that it is permitted to remove the bones and then eat the meat or the fish immediately, as, since that is the way it is always eaten, it is not the manner of Selecting; rather it is the manner of eating. The *Beur Halakha* (319:4, s.v. *mitokh okhel*) defends even those who remove the bones from the fish **before eating** (e.g., before bringing the fish to the table), and the *Responsa Shevet HaLevi* (1:83) supports that opinion.

By contrast, the *Hazon Ish* (54:1) understands **that the Ramban and the Ran** permitted removing the waste only **after putting the food into one's mouth**. In his opinion, one may not remove the waste from the food before putting the food into one's mouth, and certainly not before eating.

IN PRACTICE, those **who are lenient and remove bones while eating fish have authorities on whom they can rely**. Those who are stringent in accordance with the opinion of the *Hazon Ish* can remove the bones in a variety of manners: Place the fish in the mouth and remove the bones; hold the fish and eat its flesh; or remove the bone and suck the small amount of fish off it. In order to minimize concerns about Selecting, many Jews have adopted the custom of eating **gefilte fish**, which avoids any issues (pp. 866–872).

Definition of “by hand”: Why is it permitted to eat with a knife and a fork?

Ostensibly, it is difficult to understand why it is permitted to eat with a knife and a fork – isn't Selecting permitted only by hand? *Iggerot Moshe* (*Orah Hayim* 1:124) writes that in fact **if the utensil facilitates the act of Selecting**, i.e., the precise separation between the food and the waste, it is considered a utensil and it is prohibited to select with it. But if the utensil is no more effective than the hand in terms of the actual act of separating, but the person just prefers using the silverware for other reasons, e.g., cleanliness, or accessibility of food that

is far away, hot, or a liquid, using the utensil is considered selecting by hand, which is permitted. Therefore, in general, it is permitted to use silverware while eating. It is customary to be lenient with regard to peeling fruit and vegetables with a knife as well, even those fruit and vegetables whose peels people do not typically eat, though it is prohibited to do so with a peeler (pp. 873–878).

Selecting waste from waste: Why is it permitted to use the strainer in the sink?

Ostensibly, it should be prohibited to use a **sink strainer**, as the strainer is a utensil and the waste is selected by means of the strainer, and it is prohibited to select by means of a utensil on Shabbat. Yet, since everything going down the drain is considered waste, it is permitted. According to the *Beur Halakha* (319:3, s.v. *hayu lefanav*) **it is permitted to separate two items designated as waste**, since their separation is not significant, and that is the understanding of the *Hazon Ish* (53, s.v. *ulinyan barza*). In addition, since both types are considered waste, they can be viewed as **one type**, and there is no prohibition of Selecting with regard to one type. *Iggerot Moshe* (*Orah Hayim* 4:74, *Borer* 4) and others ruled likewise (pp. 881–885).

Is it permitted to separate two different types of trash?

On the basis of that same principle, it is permitted to separate the trash into different types: One trash can for food remnants, and a different trash can for inedible items or the like, since that is separation of waste from waste. Granted, the objective of the separation is that part of the trash will be utilized for specific purposes or recycled; but those disposing of the trash do not care about this a great deal; they merely want to protect the environment. Therefore, one should permit separating between the types of trash, unless the one separating the trash uses some of the trash, e.g., using the organic waste as fertilizer (p. 885).

Is it permitted to select the remnants of the produce of the Sabbatical Year (*Shemita*)?

When the remnants of food that is sacred with the sanctity of the Sabbatical Year (*Shemita*) are intermingled with other remnants, it is preferable to refrain from removing the remnants of the produce of the Sabbatical Year due to concern about the prohibition of Selecting, since remnants of Sabbatical Year produce are not considered waste. In practice, there is room to distinguish between several cases:

When the remnants of Sabbatical Year produce on a plate are separate from the other food remnants, it is not considered a mixture, and it is permitted to remove the remnants of Sabbatical Year produce and place them in their designated container.

If the remnants of Sabbatical Year produce are actually intermingled with the other food on the plate, the *halakha* is as follows: In the case of a vegetable salad or the like, the entire salad can be placed in the container designated for Sabbatical Year produce, as the remnants do not immediately ruin each other.

When the respective remnants ruin each other (e.g., if the remnants of a salad made with vegetables from the Sabbatical Year are mixed with the remnants of a cholent), it is not advisable to separate them, due to concern about the prohibition of Selecting. It is also not advisable to transfer them to the container designated for Sabbatical Year produce, to avoid ruining the produce that is already there. Therefore, in that case, one should take all the mixed remnants on the plate, place them into a separate plastic bag, and place it aside (or even in the trash) until the remnants spoil. That action is not considered to be causing the ruining of Sabbatical Year produce. Since the produce is already intermingled, doing this does not change its status (pp. 886–890).

Is it permitted to wash the dirt from fruit and vegetables?

All agree that it is permitted to wash or soak fruit and vegetables in soapy water on which there is no obvious dirt but which one washes in the interest of cleanliness or health (e.g., if there is insecticide),

even if one only wants to eat them later. The reason that there is no problem of Selecting in performing that action is that people could eat the fruit even without rinsing it; therefore, rinsing it does not render it fit for consumption, and perhaps, whatever is on the surface of the produce is considered the same type as the produce (*Responsa Shevet HaLevi*, vol. 1, 52:2; *Eil Meshulash* 15, note 22; *Shemirat Shabbat KeHilkhata* 3, note 54).

When **actual dirt is stuck** on the produce, the *Ḥazon Ish* (cited in *Eil Meshulash* 15:3) rules that it is prohibited to wash them on Shabbat itself (based on *Mishna* 140a), and that appears to be the opinion of the *Mishna Berura* (319:29). Some of the prominent *Aḥaronim* permitted rinsing the produce **just before eating** it, since there is no other way to reach the food and it is similar to removing a peel, in addition to other reasons (*Ketzot HaShulḥan* 125, *Badei HaShulḥan* 16; *Iggerot Moshe* 1:125; Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach cited in *Shemirat Shabbat KeHilkhata* 3, note 48; and others), and that is the *halakha* in practice. It is permitted to wash the produce under the faucet for immediate consumption, but it is prohibited to soak them in water (based on *Mishna* 140a).

When dirt is **intermingled with the produce**, e.g., grapes or strawberries that have waste among the fruit, this is not comparable to fruit and a peel; rather, it is an ordinary mixture of food and waste. Therefore, it is prohibited to remove the waste by rinsing it in water; rather, one should remove the produce by hand and eat it immediately (pp. 891–899).

Is it permitted to soak lettuce in soapy water?

It is permitted to soak **lettuce from a crop without worms** in soapy water when the lettuce is not mixed with dirt, and it is also permitted to remove a worm from the lettuce together with part of a lettuce leaf. One may not kill the worms on Shabbat, and therefore, it is prohibited to soak lettuce from a standard crop in soapy water; presumably it contains worms, and soaking the lettuce will kill them (pp. 899–900).