

Squeezing liquids absorbed in food

It was stated above that it is prohibited to squeeze fruit or vegetables in order to extract their **natural** juices. There are foods into which a liquid has entered **from the outside**, such as a pickle that has absorbed brine, or a doughnut or breaded chicken cutlet fried in oil. Is the squeezing of such foods permitted on Shabbat?



It is permitted to place fried food on an absorbent surface.

It is permitted to squeeze a food that is soaked in a liquid in order to eat it without the liquid

This matter is discussed in the **Gemara**.

The relevant passage (145a) addresses **pickled vegetables** and **boiled vegetables**, and it differentiates between two cases: If the purpose of the squeezing is **for their own sake**, i.e., in order to enable one to eat the vegetables without liquid, all agree that squeezing them is

permitted, whether the vegetables are pickled or boiled. But if the purpose of the squeezing is **for their liquids**, i.e., in order to use the liquid that is extracted from the vegetables, there is a dispute:

Shmuel said: With regard to both pickled vegetables and boiled vegetables, if he squeezes them for the vegetables themselves, it is permitted. If he does so for their liquids, he is exempt from bringing a sin-offering, but it is prohibited to do so *lekhatila* (*ab initio*). Rabbi Yoḥanan said: With regard to both pickled vegetables and boiled vegetables, if one squeezes them for the vegetables themselves it is permitted; if one does it for their liquids, he is liable to bring a sin-offering.

In other words, everyone **permits** squeezing the vegetables **in order to eat them without liquid**. On the other extreme, everyone



Squeezing pickled foods in order to use their liquid is prohibited but it is permitted in order to consume the food without the liquid.

prohibits squeezing the vegetables in order to **use their liquids** (for example, as a condiment for bread). The dispute between the *amora'im* is that according to Rabbi Yoḥanan this prohibition applies by Torah law, while according to Shmuel it applies by rabbinic law.⁶ This is referring not to the natural juice of

It is prohibited to squeeze a food that is saturated with liquid in order to use the liquid

6. Rav distinguishes between pickled and boiled foods. He holds that it is permitted to squeeze **boiled** food even in order to use the liquid, but it is prohibited by rabbinic law to squeeze pickled food in order to use its liquid: “With regard to pickled vegetables that one squeezed, Rav said: If he wants to squeeze them because he needs the vegetables themselves without the liquid, it is permitted to do so on Shabbat. If he squeezes them because he needs their liquid, he is exempt from bringing a sin-offering, but it is prohibited to do so *lekhatila*. And with regard to boiled vegetables, whether he needs the vegetables themselves without their liquid or whether he wants to squeeze

the vegetable, but to a liquid which it has absorbed, and therefore Shmuel maintains that the prohibition of Threshing in this case applies only by rabbinic law. By contrast, according to Rabbi Yoḥanan the prohibition applies by Torah law, as one removes liquid that the food contains, regardless of its source.

Why is squeezing permitted when one has no interest in the liquid?

As stated, everyone permits squeezing pickled and boiled vegetables in order to eat them without liquid, and the *Shulḥan Arukh* rules likewise (320:7).⁷ What is the reason for this lenient ruling?

Rashi explains that one who does this has not performed the labor of Extracting, “since he does not need the liquid” (ad loc., s.v. *legufo*). In other words, the essence of Extracting is removing something from its encasing **in order to use it**, and it therefore follows that **when one does not need the extracted substance, it is not classified as Extracting at all**. *Tosafot* (73b, s.v. *vetzarikh la’etzim*) write, along the same lines, that this is not the manner of Threshing at all. The **Ramban** (111a, s.v. *hai mesokhraita*) and the **Ran** (41a Rif, s.v. *ulfikhakh*) explain similarly, adding that although in certain circumstances the Sages do prohibit squeezing of this sort, there is no decree in this case.

Another reason for the leniency is stated by *Tosafot* in *Ketubot* (6a, s.v. *hai mesokhraita*). In their opinion, the prohibition of Extracting applies even if the person is not interested at all in the liquid that

the vegetables for their liquids, it is permitted to squeeze them on Shabbat” (*Shabbat* 145a).

7. In practice, do we rule in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yoḥanan or Shmuel? **Rabbeinu Ḥananel** (145a) rules in accordance with **Rabbi Yoḥanan** that this is prohibited by Torah law, whereas the **Rif** (61a) and the **Rambam** (21:13) rule in accordance with **Shmuel** that this is prohibited only by rabbinic law. The *Shulḥan Arukh* (320:7) cites the opinion of the **Rif** and the **Rambam** without attribution, and later he cites the opinion of **Rabbeinu Ḥananel** in his name. According to the principles of interpreting the rulings of the *Shulḥan Arukh*, this apparently implies he holds that the prohibition applies only by rabbinic law. Yet, below (pp. 732–735) it will be claimed that this dispute has practical ramifications for the issue of squeezing onto food, and that the *Shulḥan Arukh* cites the opinion of **Rabbeinu Ḥananel** in order to teach that it is preferable to be stringent in accordance with his opinion.

is being squeezed out. The Sages permit squeezing specifically in the cases of pickled and boiled food, as the liquid absorbed in them is not an independent drink, but part of the food. Even after the liquid has been extracted from the food, it is considered food rather than drink, at least when one is not interested in it. Consequently, it is considered an act of **extracting food from food**, concerning which there is no prohibition of Threshing.

TO CONCLUDE, it is permitted to squeeze a food **that is saturated with an external liquid** if the aim is **to eat the cooked food without the liquid**. Therefore, one may squeeze a **doughnut or latke** to remove the oil, or squeeze a **pickled cucumber** in order to remove the water within it, when one is not interested in the liquid. It is prohibited to squeeze a pickled or cooked vegetable in order to use the liquid, e.g., as a condiment for bread.

Summary

