



Pounding Spices

Masechet Beitzah focuses primarily on *Yom Tov*. We have learnt that, unlike *Shabbat*, the *Torah* permits certain *melachot* required for food on *Yom Tov* (*ochel nefesh*). The *masechet* addresses the scope of that permit. One *melacha* discussed that catches the *Rishonim* by surprise is the grinding.

The *Mishnah* (1:7) records the following debate. *Beit Shamma* maintains that spices can be pound with a pestle made of wood while salt can only be ground using a jug. The *Bartenura* explains that since the spices cannot be ground in advance, a small change (*shinui*) from the regular method is sufficient. With respect to salt however, since the flavour would not diminish if it were ground before *Yom Tov*, a greater *shinui* is required. *Beit Hillel* however maintains that for spices, no *shinui* is required and a stone pestle may be used, while for salt, a small *shinui*, using a wood pestle, is sufficient.

The difficulty raised with this *Mishnah* is that the pounding of spices is the derivative of the *melacha* of *tochen* (grinding) and one of the *melachot* that are forbidden on *Yom Tov*. The *Ran* cites the *Yerushalim* that it is prohibited on a biblical level. The *Torah* places the instruction to guard the *matzot* and the permission to perform the *melacha* for *ochel nefesh* near one another. The *Yerushalmi* therefore learns that only those *melachot* that are performed from the time one needs to guard the *matzot* are permitted; from kneading onward. How do we understand this *Mishnah*? How can a *shinui* help to permit a biblical prohibition? Furthermore, even according to those opinions that understand that grinding on *Yom Tov*

is prohibited on a Rabbinic level, it would not be permitted, even with a *shinui* if the *melacha* could have been performed prior to *Yom Tov*.

The *Pnei Yehoshua* initially suggest that the pounding of spices is different. For the *melacha* of grinding in general, for wheat or dyes, the raw products are not usable until they are ground and then mixed with water. Spices however are used for adding flavour and that purpose can be achieved prior to their pounding. Consequently, the action in our *Mishnah* is not really a *melacha*.

The *Pnei Yehoshua* however rejects this suggestions since most *poskim* agree that if one chopped their vegetables finely, they would be violating the biblical prohibition of performing the *melacha* of grinding.

The *Pnei Yehoshua* therefore reverts to the explanation of the *Ran* (in the third *perek*) that the *melachot* that were prohibited despite the justification of *ochel nefesh* are those that are generally performed and left for a while. This would include picking a fruit from the tree, despite wanting to eat it immediately, since we are focusing on the action itself. When pounding spices, the result of the *melacha* is used immediately one's food. He also cites the *Raavad* who makes the same distinction but adds that it is the activities in the former category that would be performed by an *aved* for his master. Since pounding spices to added to one's food immediately does not resemble *avdut*, the *Chachamim* were lenient.¹

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¹ The *Maggid Mishnah* (*Yom Tov* 1:5) however explains that they we are lenient with those things that were *machshir* food, improved food and not eaten on their own. The *Lechem Mishnah* (3:12) asks that the logic appears to be reversed. Why would the *machshir* be more lenient that with *ochel nefesh* itself. The *Chatam Sofer* (*Beitzah* 14a) explains that the intention is not that the spices are a *machshir* alone. The spices are *ochel nefesh* themselves and they act as a *machshir* for other *ochel nefesh*. For *ochel nefesh* we

explained that *melechot* that are for a number of days (harvesting, grinding, etc) are not permitted. We find that for *machshirin*, even those *melachot* are permitted (in certain ways - see 3:7). Consequently since this is a *machshir* and *ochel* it affords further leniencies

Revision Questions

סוכה ה': ה' – ח'

- What was the maximum and minimum number of *tekiyot* that were performed each day in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*? (ה': ה')
- When was this maximum number achieved? (ה': ה')
- Describe how the *avodah* was divided between the twenty-four *mishmarot* during *Sukkot*. (ה': ה')
- When else did all the *mishmarot* work together in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*? (ה': ה')
- When all the *mishmarot* worked together how did they decide who offered the *korbanot tamid*? (ה': ה')
- When else did the *mishmarot* each get a share in the *lechem ha'panim*? (ה': ה')
- How was the *lechem ha'panim* ordinarily divided? (ה': ח')
- Where would they divide up the allocated *lechem ha'panim* between the *kohanim*? (ה': ח')
- Which *mishmar* would always divide their share in the South of the *azarah*? (ה': ח')

ביצה א': א' – ב': א'

- What two arguments between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* open *Masechet Beitzah*? (א': א')
- Which opinion holds that one should ideally not slaughter a *chaya* or bird on *Yom Tov* and why? (ב': א')
- Explain the debate regarding what one must do *erev Yom Tov* in order to slaughter birds on *Yom Tov*. (ג': א')
- Can one slaughter birds on *Yom Tov* if: (א': ד')
 - He set aside black birds and found in their place white birds?
 - He set aside two birds and found in their place three birds?
 - He set aside birds in the nest and found birds in front of their nest?
- What are *trisin* and what is the debate regarding *trisin*? (ה': א')
- Can one carry a young child on *Yom Tov*? (Explain both opinions) (ה': א')
- Explain the debate regarding taking *challah* to a *kohen* on *Yom Tov*. (ו': א')
- Does it matter when the *challah* was separated? (ו': א')
- Which *melachot* that are connected to *ochel nefesh* does *Beit Shammai* hold must be performed with a *shinui*? (ז': א'-ח')
- What does *Beit Hillel* forbid from being sent on *Yom Tov*? (ט': א')
- Can one send *kilayim* garments to another on *Yom Tov* and why? (י': א')
- Complete the following phrase: (י': ג')

”זה הכלל: _____ - ביום טוב משלחין אותו.”
- Other than making an *eiruv tavshilin*, how can one effectively cook on *Yom Tov* for *Shabbat*? (י': ב')
- What is required to make an *eiruv tavshilin*? (י': ב')
- Can one cook on *Yom Tov* for *Shabbat* if they ate their *eiruv tavshilin*? (י': ב')

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
29 October ט' חשוון	30 October י' חשוון	31 October י"א חשוון	1 November י"ב חשוון	2 November י"ג חשוון	3 November י"ד חשוון	4 November ט"ו חשוון
Beitzah 2:2-3	Beitzah 2:4-5	Beitzah 2:6-7	Beitzah 2:8-9	Beitzah 2:10-3:1	Beitzah 3:2-3	Beitzah 3:4-5

