The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Sun, May 15, 2022 ■ י"ד אייר, תשפ"ב
סימן קע"א סעיף א'

Overview

Siman 171 Seif 1:

A person may do what he needs to with bread. This is limited to where the bread will not become repulsive but if it will become repulsive it is prohibited. For this reason one may not place raw meat on it, pass a full cup over it or use it to support a dish that is filled with food so that if the food spills on the bread it will become repulsive. One may not wash his hands with wine whether natural or diluted even if the washing is not for a meal. It is prohibited to throw bread since this is degrading to the food. Just as one may not throw bread, so too, one may not throw other foods that will become repulsive as a result but if the food will not become repulsive, e.g. nuts, pomegranates and quinces, it is permitted.

- The same is certainly true regarding other foods. (M.B. 2)
- One may do something repulsive to food if it is for medicinal purposes. Even if the purpose is not medicinal but provides a use for people and it is common for people to do this, it is permitted. One may not crack open an olive to wash one's hands since the olives become repulsive as a result. (M.B. 4)
- Even though it is not for washing for a meal it is prohibited since it is degrading to the wine and the same is true for other liquids. (M.B. 8)
- Even if the bread does not become repulsive it is prohibited to throw it since it is disrespectful to the bread. (M.B. 9)
- If one sees food on the ground he is obligated to pick it up. (M.B. 11)
- Rav Huna maintains that one may not give people food to animals but Elya Rabba is uncertain whether halacha follows his opinion. Machatzis HaShekel asserts that if one has no other animal food it is certainly permitted to feed an animal people food and perhaps that is why people are lenient and feed bread to birds. (M.B. 11)

Halacha Highlight

Treating food with respect

Shulchan Aruch Siman 171 Seif 1
ואין זורקין הפת
And one does not throw bread

Shulchan Aruch discusses the obligation to treat food and especially bread with respect. Although one may use bread or other foods for his needs he may not use the bread in a manner that could cause it to become repulsive. For example, one may not place raw meat on bread since the meat will render the bread repulsive. Another restriction that applies to food is that one may not throw food. With regards to bread, this means that one may not throw the bread altogether, even if it does not become repulsive as a result (מ"ב סק"ט). One may not throw other foods if by throwing them they will become repulsive. As an example, Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"א) writes that one may not throw a fig that it fully ripe since it will become squashed when it is thrown, rendering it repulsive.

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"א) adds another obligation that is a subset of this principle. Referencing the Gemara in Eruvin (64b) he writes that when one sees food on the ground it is prohibited to leave it there. One is obligated to pick it up. Some Poskim write that it is not necessary to pick up food that one sees on the ground and it is sufficient to move it to the side so that it will be trampled. Furthermore, it is noted that there are slightly different applications for this halacha for bread than for other foods. When it comes to other foods the obligation to lift it up or move it to the side applies only if the food is still edible and contains the volume of an olive. Regarding bread and pas haba'ah b'kisnin, one is obligated to lift them up or move them to the side even if the bread is no longer edible and even if the piece contains less than the volume of an olive. Although there is not a technical obligation to move the bread to the side in these instances, it is the correct thing to do (פסקי תשובות אות ז').

Stories to Share

The Caterer's Question

ש"ע, ס' קע"א, א': "ואין זורקין הפת משום בזיון אוכלים..."

Today's abundance gives rise to strange halachic complications. For example, a wedding hall has vast quantities of food left over after events, much of which is still delicious and wholesome. With so many people who can hardly put food onto their tables, it is surely absurd to have such huge amounts of food thrown away.

One learned guest at a hall was shocked to see the waiters throwing everything out. He quickly found the owner who was always on premises and gently rebuked him for his unknowing violation of the halacha on today's amud. "I am sure you are unaware that it is forbidden to throw out food at all—even throwing bread or other food which will be ruined is forbidden. Obviously one may not throw out such an abundance of food!"

The owner of the hall felt crushed by these words and wondered what he should do. "But how can I preserve the leftovers in a way that they will help people? Of course this is theoretically possible, but it will cost me a fortune of money. Am I really obligated to open a soup kitchen just because my business by its very nature has an abundance of high-quality leftovers?"

When this question reached Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv he ruled decisively. "We must find a heter for those who own simchah halls and have to deal with huge quantities of food on a daily basis. They are permitted to dispose of this food because preserving it would cost more money than any profit which could be made from selling this food."

עץ השדה, ס' ט"ז, הערה כ"א