The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן שכ"א סעיף ו'-ז'

Halacha Highlight

Pounding pepper

Shulchan Aruch Siman 321 Seif 7
מתר לדוך פלפלין
It is permitted to pound pepper

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ז') rules that it is permitted for one to pound even a large quantity of pepper as long as he does so with the handle of a knife and on a plate. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ"ה) explains that in order for it to be permitted to pound pepper one must employ two deviations (שינויים) from the way one would pound it during the week. Using the handle of the knife as opposed to the blade is one deviation and pounding the pepper on a plate rather than in a mortar is the second deviation. He then adds that pounding pepper on a table or on the bottom of a utensil is also considered a deviation and thus permitted.

Mishnah Berura (שם) emphasizes in the name of later authorities that it is only permitted to pound pepper if one uses the handle of a knife but it is prohibited to cut pepper into very fine pieces using the blade of a knife similar to the prohibition against cutting vegetables very fine with the blade of a knife as discussed in *seif* 12. Sha'ar HaTziyun (סק"ל) notes that the source for this ruling is Magen Avrohom who equates pounding pepper with cutting vegetables. Accordingly, one could adopt a lenient approach if one's intent is to eat the pepper immediately after pounding it similar to the allowance to cut vegetables very finely if one intends to eat it immediately. Elya Rabba, however, does not issue a definitive lenient ruling about this matter. The reason to prohibit pounding pepper very finely even immediately before eating, explains Shulchan Aruch HaRav (סע' ז'), is that pepper is not a food that is eaten by itself; it is added to other foods. In other words, the allowance to cut a vegetable into very fine pieces before eating is because the cutting is seen as part of the eating process. Accordingly, that allowance applies only to those foods that are eaten by themselves but this rationale does not apply to foods that are always added to other foods.

Overview

Siman 321 Seif 6:

One may not salt a large quantity of beans or lentils that were cooked in their skins.

- Salting improves their taste. (M.B. 22)

Siman 321 Seif 7:

It is permitted to pound pepper, even in a large quantity, as long as it is done with the handle of a knife and inside a bowl.

- If one grinds pepper or other spice in a mortar, even a single grain, he has violated the Biblical prohibition against grinding. (M.B. 23)
- He may only grind what is needed for that Shabbos. (M.B. 24)
- It is also permitted to pound with the handle of a knife on the table or the back side of a utensil but it is forbidden to use a pestle even on a table or the back side of a bowl. Later authorities write that one may not finely cut pepper with a knife similar to the prohibition against finely cutting a vegetable. (M.B. 25)