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Explaining the Mishna

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: If various kinds of food lie before him, he may select and eat, select and put it aside (for others to eat); but he must not select, and if he does, he is liable to a *chatas*.

The *Gemora* asks: What does this mean?

Ulla said: This is its meaning: He may select to eat on the same day, and he may select and put it aside (for others to eat) for the same day; but he must not select for the next day, and if he does, he is liable to a *chatas*.

Rav Chisda asked: Is it then permitted to bake for the same day, or is it permitted to cook for the same day? [And since you said that selecting for use on the next day entails a *chatas*, it is a forbidden labor in the full sense of the term, and therefore prohibited even if required for the same day.]

Rather, Rav Chisda said: He may select and eat less than the standard amount (to be liable; i.e., less than a dried fig), and he may select and put aside less than the standard amount; but he must not select as much as the standard amount, and if he does, he is liable to a *chatas*.

Rav Yosef asked: Is it then permitted to bake less than the standard amount? [Although one is not liable to a *chatas* for a labor less than the minimum amount, it is nevertheless forbidden to do so.]

Rather, said Rav Yosef: He may select by hand and eat, or

select by hand and put it aside (for others to eat); but he may not select with a funnel or a large dish; and if he does, he is exempt, nevertheless it is forbidden. [There is no liability, because this is not the usual manner of selecting; nevertheless it is forbidden, because it is somewhat similar to selecting by means of a sieve. Selecting by hand is not similar at all to a sieve, and therefore completely permitted.] He may not select with a fine sieve or a coarse sieve, and if he does, he is liable to a *chatas*.

Rav Hamnuna asked: Did the *braisa* mention anything about a funnel and a large dish?

Rather, said Rav Hamnuna: He may select and eat, taking the food from the waste, and he may select and put it aside (for others to eat), taking the food from the waste. But he must not select the waste from the food, and if he does, he is liable to a *chatas*.

Abaye asked: Did the *braisa* mention anything about a food being taken from the waste?

Rather, said Abaye: He may select and eat immediately (for that is not similar to the normal manner of selecting), and he may select and put it aside (for others to eat) for immediate use; but he may not select for (consumption for) later on the same day, and if he does, it is regarded as though he were selecting for storage, and he is liable to a *chatas*.

The Rabbis reported this to Rava. He said to them: Nachmeini (Abaye) has said well.

The *Gemora* states: If two kinds of food lie before him, and he selects and eats or selects and puts it aside (for others to eat), Rav Ashi learned that he is not liable, and Rabbi Yirmiyah of Difti learned that he is liable.



The *Gemora* asks: Rav Ashi learned that he is not liable!? But it was taught that he is liable?

The *Gemora* answers: There is no difficulty, for one (Rav Ashi) was referring to a funnel or a large dish, whereas the other (the *braisa*) refers to a fine sieve or a coarse sieve.

When Rav Dimi came, he related: It was Rav Bibi's Shabbos (to serve the students), and Rabbi Ammi and Rabbi Assi chanced to be there. He cast a basket of fruit before them, and I do not know whether it was because he held that it is forbidden to pick out the food from the waste, or whether he wished to be generous (by throwing a large amount in front of them).

Chizkiyah said: One who picks lupines (after cooking) out of their shells is liable.

The *Gemora* asks: Shall we say that Chizkiyah holds that it is forbidden to select the food from the waste?

The *Gemora* answers: Lupines are different, because they are boiled seven times, and if one does not remove it (the edible portion), it becomes spoiled, therefore it is like removing the waste from the food. [The lupine bean is regarded as the waste and the other beans are regarded as the food.]

The *Mishna* had stated: Grinding (is one of the thirty-nine primary labors).

Rav Pappa said: He who cuts up beets very fine is liable on account of grinding.

Rav Menasheh said: He who cuts wood chips (for fuel) is liable on account of grinding.

Rav Ashi: If he is particular about their size, he is liable on account of cutting (for in the Mishkan, the skins were cut to a specific size).

The *Mishna* had stated: Kneading and baking (are from the thirty-nine primary labors).

Rav Pappa said: Our *Tanna* omits the cooking of herbs, which took place in connection with the (construction of

the) Mishkan, and mentioned baking (which did not take place in connection with the construction of the Mishkan)!?

The *Gemora* answers: Our *Tanna* is mentioning the order of making bread.

Rav Acha son of Rav Avira said: He who throws a (moist) peg into a stove (in order to harden it) is liable on account of cooking.

The *Gemora* asks: But is that not obvious?

The *Gemora* answers: You might have said that his intention is to strengthen the vessel (and one is liable for cooking only if he softens the article); therefore we are informed that it the peg is first softened (and for that he is liable) and then it hardens.

Rabbah the son of Rav Huna said: He who heats pitch (turning it into a liquid) is liable on account of cooking.

The *Gemora* asks: But is that not obvious?

The *Gemora* answers: You might have said that since it hardens again, he is not liable (for the result of the cooking was only temporary); therefore he informs us otherwise.

Rava said: He who makes an earthenware barrel is liable to seven *chatas* offerings. [(i) The clods of earth are first crushed into fine particles – this constitutes grinding; (ii) the large pebbles are removed — selecting (iii) it is then sifted; (iv) the powder is mixed with water — kneading; (v) the resultant clay is smoothed when the structure of the barrel is made — smoothing; (vi) the fire is lit in the kiln; and (vii) the vessel is hardened in the kiln — baking.] He who makes an earthenware oven is liable to eight *chatas* offerings. [He is liable for the seven mentioned above, and an additional one, for after it is hardened in the kiln, a layer of mud is daubed on the inside, to enable it to preserve heat. This completes it, and he is liable for “striking the final blow.” A barrel, however, needs no special labor to complete it.]

Abaye said: He who makes a large wicker receptacle is liable to eleven *chatas* offerings. [(i and ii) uprooting the reeds is a two-fold labor: (a) reaping, (b) planting, since it



causes the remaining plant to grow; (iii) collecting them — gathering, (iv) selecting the best; (v) smoothing them; (vi) splitting them lengthwise into thinner rods — grinding; (vii) cutting them to measure; (viii) stretching the lengthwise rods — setting up the warp; (ix) drawing the reeds through these, threading it above and below the lengthwise rods — this is the equivalent of setting heddles; (x) braiding the canes — weaving; and finally (xi) cutting it round after weaving in order to finish it off, — ‘striking the final blow’.] And if he sews around its mouth, he is liable to thirteen *chatas* offerings (the additional two being: sewing by the border and tying the threads).

The *Mishna* had stated: Shearing wool and whitening it (are from the thirty-nine primary labors).

Rabbah bar bar Chanah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: He who spins wool that is still on the animal’s back on Shabbos is liable to three *chatas* offerings; one on account of shearing, another on account of disentangling, and the third on account of spinning.

Rav Kahana said: Neither shearing, disentangling, nor spinning is done in this manner (and therefore he is not liable at all).

The *Gemora* asks: But is it not so? Surely it was taught in the name of Rabbi Nechemiah: They (the Jewish women of the Wilderness) washed (the hairs) on the goats and they spun them on the goats; this proves that spinning on the back of the animal is designated as spinning!?

The *Gemora* answers: The extraordinary wisdom (of these women) is different. [The Torah emphasizes there the skill that this demanded, which shows that normal spinning is different, and it would be regarded as an “unusual manner” when done by ordinary people.].

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: He who plucks a feather off of a bird, clips it, and plucks its hairs, is liable to three *chatas* offerings.

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: For plucking the feather, one is liable on account of shearing; for clipping it, he is liable on account of cutting; and for plucking its hairs, he is liable for smoothing.

The *Mishna* had stated: Tying and untying (are from the thirty-nine primary labors).

The *Gemora* asks: Where was there tying in the Mishkan?

Rava said: The curtains covering the Mishkan were tied on the tent-pegs (in order that they shouldn’t flap in the wind).

The *Gemora* asks: But that was tying with the intention of (subsequent) untying (and one would not be liable for that)?

Rather, Abaye said: The weavers of the curtains, when a thread broke, tied it up.

Rava said to him: You have explained tying; but what can be said about untying? And should you answer that when two knots (in the material) chanced to come together, one untied one and left the other knotted; it may be asked that seeing that one would not do like that before a king of flesh and blood, how much more so before the King of all kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He?

Rather, said Rava, and others state, Rabbi Ilai: Those who caught the *chilazon* (a kind of fish whose blood was used for dyeing the curtains of the Mishkan) tied and untied (the nets).

The *Mishna* had stated: Sewing two stitches (is one of the thirty-nine primary labors).

The *Gemora* asks: But it cannot endure (so why should he be liable)?

Rabbah bar bar Chanah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: This is providing that he knots them (at the end). (74a – 74b)