

Dish Out

December 15, 2022

**Q** After washing the dishes on Shabbos night, may I organize them on the counter or in the dishwasher by type, or is that a violation of *borer*?



**A** The *melacha* of *borer* entails selecting an item out of a mixture.

Organizing the contents of a mixture is also included (Biur Halacha 319:3).

Therefore, organizing mixed dishes is a direct violation of the *melacha*.

If three conditions are met, selecting on Shabbos is permitted (S.A. O.C. *ibid.*): a) The selecting is done by hand; b) it's for immediate use; and c) it is the desired item that is removed from the undesired ones (*ochel mitoch psoless*).

The first condition is met in your case, because you're arranging the dishes by hand. The second condition is not, because the dishes will not be used until the daytime *seudah*. It is questionable whether *ochel mitoch psoless* can be fulfilled, because all the dishes are of equal interest.

The *poskim* say one may pull an item indiscriminately out of a mixture (*haba beyado*) and then put it in its proper place. This is not deemed to be *borer*, because the item was chosen randomly (Shmiras Shabbos Kehilchasah 3:85). But it is only permitted if the item is taken in order to perform a task, e.g., to wash it or dry it. If it is removed just to put it away, that is *borer* (*ibid.* 12:24, and see footnote). So you may randomly take a dish from the sink, wash it, and then put it in its designated place. This may then be done with all the dishes in turn until everything is organized.

In addition, you may clear the table of its dishes and organize them properly in the dishwasher. Even though the dish itself is not being used, the act of removing it from the table is considered a separate task, because it would be done regardless. Once the dish is in your hand, it may be put away in its place (*ibid.* 3:88).