

YESHIVAT HAR ETZION
ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

TALMUDIC METHODOLOGY
By Rav Moshe Taragin

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

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לע"נ

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Shiur #31: *Dash* – part 1

The *melakha* of *dash* involves the separation of produce from the shells and sheaths within which they grow. The most common modern day application of this *melakha* is probably the extraction of juices from fruit. In this *shiur*, we will explore the basic definition of this *melakha*.

As noted, the classic scenario of *dash* is the separation of kernels of wheat from the stalk and chaff which surround them and protect them during growth. Presumably, this *melakha* is similar in structure to *borer*: each *melakha* separates edible material from inedible chaff. *Dash* separates produce from the waste (*pesolet*) to which it is **attached**, whereas *borer* separates food from **detached** waste.

However, several comments of Rashi (*Shabbat* 74a and 95a) indicate that *dash* is not defined primarily as separating produce from inedible material. Instead, the *melakha* is defined as removing a **concealed** item from its protective coat. The activity is not defined as one of separation, but rather as one of uncovering.

The primary practical ramifications between these two approaches would surround items that are concealed but not attached, or, conversely, attached by not concealed. Gauging the applicability of *dash* in these two instances can help isolate the primary factor of the *melakha*.

The Maharil questions the permissibility of removing peas from their pod on Shabbat. The Taz (319:16) suggests that if the peas were detached from the pod before Shabbat, even though the pod was still sealed, *dash*

would not be violated. Presumably, the Taz defines *dash* as primarily entailing detachment. Thus, if the peas were detached prior to Shabbat, even if they remain concealed, no violation occurs when they are removed from the pod. If *dash* were defined as removing a shell that covers food, perhaps the Taz's conclusion would not entail. (In practice, we rely on the Maharil's assertion that the husk itself is edible, and *dash* does not pertain to separating one food item from a different food item; see the continuation of the *shiur* below.)

The reverse situation is described by a *gemara* in *Shabbat* (73b), which discusses the violation of *dash* in the case of someone who hurls a rock or slab of hardened dirt at a tree, causing the figs to become detached from the tree. Although the figs were originally attached, in this case, they were not concealed, yet *dash* is violated. Tosafot is bothered by this application of *dash*, and they therefore reinterpret the *gemara* to refer to removing an encasing **shell** surrounding the figs. Rashi may have been concerned with the simple reading as well, as he describes the separation of a fig from an encasing cluster of figs – perhaps maintaining the definition of *dash* as the uncovering of a concealed (and protected) fruit. However, the simple reading of the *gemara* does indicate that *dash* is violated when produce is separated from other material, even if the produce was not encased or concealed. (In this instance, as the *gemara* itself asserts, both *dash* and *kotzer* would be violated, since the figs were separated from the tree as well.)

This query would also influence an interesting question: Is *dash* violated when the separated item is not needed for any purpose?

The *gemara* in *Ketuvot* (6a) famously describes the permissibility of squeezing a rag that has absorbed wine. Rabbeinu Tam claims that if the wine is not needed, *dash* is not violated, as the action is a “*melakha she-eina tzerikha le-gufa*.” A *melakha* is only violated if there is some **need** for the object **upon** which the *melakha* is performed. Since the *melakha* is performed upon the wine, the *melakha* is not violated if there is no interest in the use of the wine.

This assertion is logical assuming that *dash* is defined as an act upon a concealed item (in this case, the wine which is absorbed in the rag). As such, the *melakha* is performed upon the concealed or absorbed wine, and if the wine has no utility, it is indeed a *melakha she-eina tzerikha le-gufa*. If, however, *dash* is defined as **separating** produce from an attached item, the *melakha* of separation is performed upon each item. As long as there is some utility in **either** item, the *melakha* should be violated. Any *melakha* that is defined as an act of separation requires utility in **either** of the materials being separated. This theory is suggested by the Ramban (*Shabbat* 106), who writes that cutting hair is forbidden even if the cut hair provides no utility. Since cutting (*tolesh*) is defined as separating body extensions from the body, utility either in the body or the hair and nails that were cut is sufficient to render the *melakha* a full Shabbat violation.

If *dash* is defined as separation, it would parallel cutting hair, and Rabbeinu Tam's exemption in situations in which the wine has no utility

should not apply. Separating the wine from the cloth by squeezing allows utility of the emptied cloth, and that utility is sufficient to define the *melakha* as providing utility. Evidently, then, Rabbeinu Tam defines *dash* as an activity upon the concealed/absorbed wine. *Dash* constitutes uncovering a concealed or absorbed item. Since the *melakha* is performed solely upon the wine and it possesses no utility, this *melakha* is deficient and not forbidden. (See the Kehillat Yaakov, *Shabbat* 46 and *Ketuvot* 4, for a fuller description of this application.)

The definition of *dash* also affects the type of action necessary to constitute a violation. The *gemara* (95a) describes drawing the blood of a mollusk for dye as a form of *dash*. Rashi (commenting on a strange language in the *gemara*) claims that *dash* is only violated if the person manually squeezes the blood out, rather than letting it flow naturally after piercing the shell or skin of the mollusk. Perhaps Rashi maintains that since *dash* is defined as removing a concealed item (in this instance, the blood), perhaps a **direct** action must be performed upon that concealed item. Merely piercing the skin of the mollusk and allowing the blood to flow would not be considered an act **upon** the blood and would thus not entail *dash*. By contrast, if *dash* is defined as separating the blood from the mollusk, piercing the shell would be sufficient to constitute a violation, since the *melakha* is defined as an act of separation performed on either of the two attached items. The assertion that Rashi claims that *dash* entails uncovering concealed items, rather than separating attached items, would certainly reflect the aforementioned statements of Rashi indicating this definition of *dash*.

A final application may surround the applicability of *dash* to a thin shell (*kelipa*). The *gemara* in *Beitza* (13b) describes a permissible process of removing the husks of barley grains on Shabbat. Tosafot question the permissibility of this activity given the prohibition of *dash*. The question is even more compelling given the prohibition of removing husks on Shabbat described in an earlier *gemara* in *Beitza* (12b), (at least according to Tosafot's understanding of that *gemara*). Tosafot explain that the permissible scenario described by the *gemara* in 13b relates to barley kernels that have already been removed from the actual husks before Shabbat. The *gemara* which permits this process refers to separating these kernels from the thin shell surrounding the grain. Based on this Tosafot, many claim that removing thin shells of onions and garlic is not a *dash* violation (although it may entail *borer* complications).

Perhaps Tosafot maintain that *dash* is defined as revealing a concealed item, and removing a grain from a thin coat therefore does not constitute *dash*. The thin shell does not **conceal** the grain, and it certainly does not protect it from physical harm. If *dash* were defined primarily as separating produce from items that it was attached to while it grew, it would be more difficult to accept Tosafot's explanation.