

## 5. Threshing

### הַדָּשׁ

1. The objective of this *av melachah* is to separate a natural product which grows in the soil from its husk or outer covering, to which it is by nature attached. This *melachah* includes threshing grain to separate the edible seed from the inedible chaff, and beating flax or cotton, when these are done with a tool or a machine.

2. When the edible or desirable matter is separated from the inedible or undesirable matter by hand it is considered a *toladah* (מְפָרֵק). The *melachah* also includes (*toladot*) activities such as stripping the husks from ears of corn, and removing peas or beans from dry, inedible pods. If the pods are fresh and edible you may remove them in small quantities for immediate consumption, since the prohibition does not apply to extracting a product that is edible from something that is also edible.

There are cases when you may remove edible food from inedible material. For example, you may crack and remove the hard shell from nuts such as almonds, walnuts and hazelnuts even with a nutcracker or some other instrument. You may likewise extract the marrow from bones, and may peel—even with a knife, as long as it is for immediate consumption—fruits and vegetables, such as oranges, bananas, onions, garlic, and carrots, whose rind or outer covering is not normally eaten. The reason for the leniency in these latter cases is that the food is ready for consumption. Therefore removing the inedible part is merely a component of the eating

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process (דָּרַךְ אֲכִילָה), and not an independent step in a greater process. However, when the removal of edible from inedible is an independent step in a continuing process of readying food for eating, as is the case when raw corn is husked, the act of separating is considered a *melachah*.

3. The *melachah* also includes squeezing (סְחִיטָה) olives to extract oil and grapes for wine, which is a form of separating (מְפָרֵק), a *toladah* of Threshing. As a precautionary measure, *Chazal* prohibited squeezing out such fruits as mulberries and pomegranates, which are sometimes squeezed for their juice even though they are generally eaten. This rabbinic prohibition would therefore apply as well to oranges, lemons, apples, tomatoes, grapefruits, and the like, which are commonly squeezed for their juice. Where the prohibition applies, it is forbidden irrespective of whether you squeeze the fruit with an instrument or by hand.

You may not squeeze the juice into another liquid, such as squeezing a lemon into a cup of tea, but you may squeeze the juice onto solid food,<sup>1</sup> such as fish or a salad. This is because the *toladah* of מְפָרֵק prohibits the production of juice. Once the juice is squeezed directly into the solid food and never exists as liquid, it is not considered juicing.<sup>2</sup> (Rambam *Hilchot Shabbat* 8:10) That you are never producing juice is also why you can suck the juice even out of olives and grapes, if they remain in your mouth the entire time.

You may also squeeze the juice out of fruits and vegetables other than olives and grapes if your intention is to enhance the taste of the fruit or vegetable, even if the juice is squeezed into a container so that it does not go to waste.<sup>3</sup> You may also suck the juice out of fruits, vegetables and other kinds of food, as for example soup and gravy from

1. **Putting Lemon in Tea** For this reason, you may squeeze lemon onto sugar, and then put the sugar into tea. However, you might be advised to prepare lemon juice before Shabbat, as some authorities prohibit squeezing juice onto a solid for the express purpose of putting it back in liquid. You are certainly allowed to put a slice of lemon in tea.
2. **Squeezed Directly into Solids** According to Rashi's comments on *Shabbat* 144b, squeezing juice directly onto food in order to improve the food shows conclusively that your intention is not to produce juice.
3. **Removing Excess Water or Oil from Food** You are permitted to squeeze vegetables, meat and other foods to remove the water soaked up in cooking. You may also squeeze fried food to extract the excess fat or oil in order to make it more palatable.

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meat, or wine that was soaked up in bread. Fruits and vegetables whose juice is never extracted for drinking do not come under the prohibition altogether and you may squeeze out their juice.

4. Under normal circumstances, a nursing mother may not express milk into a bottle on Shabbat. She may, of course, nurse her infant on Shabbat.<sup>4</sup>

5. Milking an animal is forbidden as a *toladah* (מַפְרָק) of the *Melachah* of Threshing if the milk is expressed into an empty vessel. Milking into a vessel containing food is rabbinically prohibited.<sup>5</sup> You may ask a non-Jew to milk an animal on Shabbat.<sup>6</sup>

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4. **Expressing Milk** A woman may express milk into a bottle on Shabbat if the baby must be fed with the mother's milk and cannot or will not nurse in any other way. Likewise, if the baby is in the hospital and must have mother's milk fresh daily, the mother may express the milk into a bottle. It is preferable to set a timer on an electric pump before Shabbat, and fasten it prior to the start of operation while it is still off. That way, the entire act will be indirect (גְּרִמָּא). A woman who is nursing may express some milk into the baby's mouth while feeding in order to induce the baby to begin nursing. If the woman is in pain because of an excess of milk, she may express some of the milk manually or if necessary with a hand pump, and let it flow out on the ground, into the sink, or into a disposable diaper where it will go to waste. Some suggest expressing the milk directly into a vessel containing a solution of soap and water. If the woman is in the hospital and the only means of expressing the milk is with an electric pump, she should have it done by a non-Jewish nurse.
5. **Milking Directly on a Solid** Even though you are allowed to squeeze juice onto food, *Chazal* forbade it in this case. The difference is squeezing juice onto food is a transfer from one edible entity to another. In the case of milking a cow, on Shabbat the cow is not edible; such milking would be allowed on Yom Tov (see *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 505), when the animal could be slaughtered and eaten.
6. **Milking on Shabbat** Although telling a non-Jew to do a *melachah* on Shabbat is ordinarily rabbinically forbidden, you may do so in order to relieve the animal from suffering (צַעַר בְּעֲלֵי חַיִּים). It is advisable that the non-Jew milk into a vessel containing food. The milk, however, may not be used or handled until after Shabbat. If a non-Jew is not available, the Jew may do the milking himself. In such a case he can milk to waste by letting the milk flow onto the ground, or by milking into a dirty pail or into a solution which will spoil the milk. In this case, you may not use the milk. Since letting the milk go to waste renders the act *patur aval asur*, *Chazal* allowed it in this specific instance because we take into account the suffering to the animal. Milking today, on farms and *kibbutzim*, utilizes a machine that operates automatically and is activated by a time clock which turns the machine on and off at pre-set times. The machine should be attached to the animal while it is not in operation. In this case the milk is permitted after Shabbat.

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6. You are not allowed to wring out a cloth which has absorbed wine or some other liquid,<sup>7</sup> nor to crush<sup>8</sup> snow<sup>9</sup> or ice in order to make use of the water. However, you may put pieces<sup>10</sup> or cubes<sup>11</sup> of ice into a drink to cool it.<sup>12</sup> You may not put ice into an empty vessel in order to drink the water when the ice melts. You may walk on snow, even though it will be crushed and will melt underfoot.

7. **Squeezing Out a Wet Cloth** The prohibition of סחיטה is a *toladah* of שד when you do it for the sake of the liquid. Wringing water from a wet cloth or garment is a violation of the *Melachah* of ליבון (whitening) since you intend to clean the cloth or garment by removing the water it soaked up.
8. **Making Snowballs or a Snowman and Walking in Snow** Although snow that falls on Shabbat is not *muktzeh*, making snowballs or a snowman involves squeezing and crushing the snow. However, you need not worry about walking in snow on Shabbat and trampling it underfoot since, even if the snow melts, you do not intend this. Moreover, *Chazal* did not prohibit it, as it is not possible to avoid it.
9. **Washing Hands in Snow** You should not wash or clean your hands by rubbing them with snow. If snow is the only option to clean your hands, you can wipe them, but you should take care not to squeeze and crush the snow or ice between your hands.
10. **Melting Sugar or Margarine** You may put a lump of sugar into a liquid or pour hot water over it to dissolve it. You are also allowed to put a pat of margarine on warm food so that it will melt over it.
11. **Making Ice Cubes and Removing Them from the Tray** You may remove ice cubes from the ice tray taken from the freezer by breaking them out of the tray, or by pouring water on the cubes in the tray. Making ice on Shabbat is a matter of different considerations. There is a debate among *Rishonim* regarding food that goes through a physical transformation on Shabbat. Some prohibit setting such transformations in motion as a violation of the rabbinic enactment against creating things that didn't exist before Shabbat (ניולד). Other *Rishonim* think that a physical change within an existing object is not akin to creating something new. Rema writes that the custom is to be strict, but that you can be lenient in case of need (*Orach Chaim* 318:16). Making ice on Shabbat is precisely an example of producing such a physical change. Therefore it follows that you should refrain from making ice cubes on Shabbat, but that in cases of necessity, such as hot weather, or to reduce swelling or to lower temperature, or even for *Oneg Shabbat*, you would be allowed to make the ice cubes. Interestingly, some argue that since ice is made primarily to be put back into liquid, the transformation should not be considered *nolad* by any opinion. This leniency seems logically consistent with the stringency mentioned in footnote 1 regarding squeezing lemon on sugar.
12. **Cooling Beverages and Bottles with Ice** You may break off pieces of ice to put into a beverage, even though some water will flow. You may place ice on fruit and around bottles containing drinks to cool them, and you may put ice in the sink and allow it to melt.

## 6. Winnowing

### הזורה

1. The objective of this *av melachah* is to separate the grain from the chaff which remains mixed together after the threshing. This *melachah* prohibits activities such as propelling the mixture of grain and chaff into a current of air by means of a winnowing fork, a shovel, or any other tool or machine used for winnowing, and thereby removing the chaff by scattering it to the wind.

2. The *Melachot* of Winnowing (זורה), Selecting (בורר), and Sifting (מְרַקֵּד) are similar, in that they comprise activities intended to separate what is fit for food (אוֹכֵל) from its undesirable elements (פְּסוּלָת). They are, however, counted individually because they were separate *melachot* performed for the *Mishkan*, using three different methods. Winnowing uses wind to separate chaff from wheat, Selecting involves removing the remaining undesirable elements by hand, and Sifting uses a sieve to separate fine bran flour from the coarse bran flour.

3. This *melachah* also includes (*toladot*) throwing a mixture of grain and chaff into the wind by hand, thereby removing the chaff from the grain, or blowing the chaff away with your mouth.

4. In addition, *Chazal* prohibited removing the chaff from ears of grain which were crushed before Shabbat, by rubbing the ears with both hands. You are also prohibited from sifting grain by transferring it from one hand to another.