

## Mashing without cutting

Does the prohibition of Grinding apply only when an item becomes divided into discrete parts, or is the very act of crushing prohibited, even if afterward it remains as a single mass?

The *Tosefta* (15:13) states that “one may not crush pressed or dried figs for the elderly on Shabbat.” The *Hazon Ish* (57, s.v. *le’inyan*) notes that when pressed or dried figs are crushed, they **remain** one mass, and even in such a case the prohibition of Grinding applies:

The *Hazon Ish*:  
Mashing is  
prohibited due to  
Grinding

In terms of the liability for Grinding, there is no difference between a dry item that is broken down into separate pieces, or a moist item **that becomes a thick mass when it is ground**, because when one crushes pressed or dried figs, they adhere into a mass, and nevertheless, there they are [prohibited] due to Grinding... and this stands to reason, **because a cohesion which is formed by moisture is not considered a cohesion.**<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, the *Hazon Ish* writes that it is prohibited to **mash a banana**, even though it remains a single mass. In his opinion, the abovementioned *Tosefta* implies that an action such as mashing is prohibited even **for immediate use**,<sup>6</sup> and mashing a banana is permitted only if one does so **in an unusual manner**.<sup>7</sup>



It is preferable to mash a banana with a spoon or the handle of a fork, but one may be lenient and mash even with the tines of a fork, just before the meal.

5. An additional proof brought by the *Hazon Ish* for his opinion will be cited in p. 1004 note 16.
6. According to the *Hazon Ish*, only chopping into small pieces is permitted for immediate use, not actual grinding. The majority of the *Aharonim* disagree (see pp. 980–984 and note 3).
7. The issues pertaining to performing grinding in an unusual manner are addressed on pp. 1008–1012.

The *Iggerot Moshe*:  
Mashing is not  
included in the  
prohibition of  
Grinding

The *Iggerot Moshe* (*Orah Hayim* 4:74, *Tohen* 2) disagrees with this ruling and **permits mashing bananas** in the standard manner. He himself maintains, as stated, that any grinding for immediate use is permitted, and he further claims that even if one accepts the opinion of the *Hazon Ish* that actual grinding is not permitted for immediate use, there is still good reason to permit mashing a banana. This is because the prohibition of Grinding is not relevant to mashing a banana at all. **The prohibition of Grinding applies only when one takes one item and turns it into small components**, but if one mashes a substance and it remains one mass, there is no violation of Grinding:

But with regard to mashing bananas, it appears that one should not prohibit this even according to the opinion of the *Hazon Ish*... because Grinding applies when one produces small slivers and crumbs, such as when grinding wheat into flour... [By contrast, in the case of a banana,] which turns soft with a lot of moisture, and its appearance does not change either... this is not Grinding... And it seems logical that for this reason Grinding does not apply to mashing bananas at all, and therefore it is difficult to understand that which the *Hazon Ish* writes, that the prohibition of grinding applies when one mashes bananas for children on Shabbat.

It seems that a proof can be cited for this opinion of Rav Feinstein from the wording of the **Rambam** (7:5): “Grinding is **taking one item and dividing it into many items**.” This implies that if there is **one item** or mass left even after the mashing has been completed, the prohibition of Grinding does not apply.<sup>8</sup>

8. The *Hazon Ish* might explain that mashing a banana does divide it into different parts. Although they still adhere to each other due to the moisture, this is not considered true cohesion, as the *Hazon Ish* states in the passage cited above. **Rav Feinstein** states that he conducted research and discovered that in fact pressed and dried figs are reduced to little bits that adhere to each other when they are crushed, and therefore such crushing is prohibited, as stated by the *Tosefta*, whereas a mashed banana remains a single mass and merely becomes softer.

The *Tehilla LeDavid* explains along similar lines (Omissions (*Hashmatot*), 252):

When one mashes a baked apple or cooked potatoes, there is apparently no problem of Grinding or Kneading, because the substance starts as one item and ends as one item.

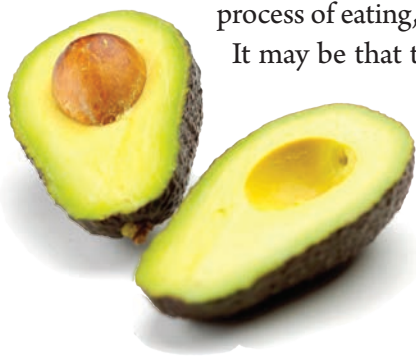
According to this opinion, if the substance remains one entity, the prohibition of Grinding does not apply. Although the *Tehilla LeDavid* is talking about a cooked item, which will be discussed below, his statement implies that the same would apply to an uncooked item.

The *Shemirat Shabbat KeHilkhata* (6:7–8) prohibits mashing a banana or an avocado even for immediate use. **Rav Feinstein** concludes that it is preferable to mash the banana in an unusual manner in order to satisfy the opinion of the *Hazon Ish*, but he adds that if this is not possible, one may mash the banana or avocado in the normal manner, provided that it remains a single mass.<sup>9</sup> I heard from my teacher, **Rav Aharon Lichtenstein**, that it is permitted to mash an **avocado directly onto bread**, as this is certainly not Grinding. Aside from the fact that such mashing does not bring about the same result as grinding, mashing an avocado onto bread is also part of the process of eating, and not the typical manner of grinding.

It may be that this is permitted even according to the opinion of the *Hazon Ish*.

**In practice**, it is best to mash bananas or avocados in an unusual manner, e.g., with a spoon or with the handle of a fork, but one who mashes with the tines of a fork has upon whom to rely, although it is preferable to do this directly onto bread **and just before eating**. If the banana or

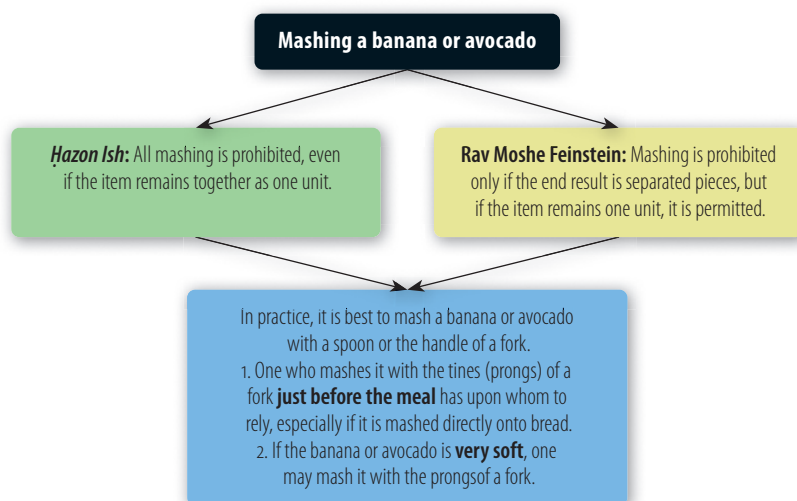
Practical halakha



It is preferable to mash an avocado in an unusual manner, or directly onto bread.

9. This is based on the opinion of **Rav Ovadia Yosef** in his *Responsa Yehaveh Daat*, cited above (p. 983). He permits mashing bananas for a child to eat immediately, even if one does so with the tines of a fork, as any grinding for immediate use is permitted.

avocado is so soft that when one holds part of it the other part falls off, all agree that one may mash it in the normal manner. The reason is that it is considered already ground, and Grinding does not apply to a substance that has already undergone grinding, as explained below (Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, cited in *Shemirat Shabbat KeHilkhata* 6:7).<sup>10</sup>



## Grinding with a utensil

Grinding with a utensil designated for grinding is prohibited even when done for immediate use

In light of the lenient ruling of the **Rashba** that one may grind food for immediate use on Shabbat, the **Rivash** (184) was asked whether it is permitted to **grate cheese with a grater**. The Rivash responded that using a grater on Shabbat is prohibited even for immediate use:

I am inclined to prohibit it, because it is similar to the ruling of Rav Pappa, that one who chops beets is liable due to the prohibited labor of Grinding. Even if we say that this is [prohibited only when one does so] for tomorrow or for [later] that day, but it is permitted for immediate use, in accordance with the opinion of

10. See below, p. 1006 note 18.

the Rashba, and we say that he permits [one to do so] for immediate use even with a utensil, this refers to a utensil such as a knife, which is not specifically designated for grinding. By contrast, a grater, which is designated specifically for grinding, is like a sieve or a sifter with regard to Selecting... Furthermore, one should be stringent and prohibit grating cheese with this utensil even on a Festival, because it is designated for grinding, and it is like [grinding] peppers in their mill, which the Sages prohibited... because it is comparable to weekday activities.

The Rivash provides two reasons for prohibiting the use of a cheese grater:

1. The leniency of grinding for immediate use is derived from the labor of **Selecting**, and just as that labor is permitted only **by hand and not with a utensil** designated for Selecting, such as a sieve or a sifter, the same applies to Grinding: It should be prohibited to grind even for immediate use in a vessel designated for grinding.
2. Since this is a utensil specifically designated for this grinding, its use should be prohibited as a **weekday activity** (*uvdin deHol*).

The *Shulhan Arukh* (321:10) rules in accordance with the opinion of the Rivash. Accordingly, one should not use a food grinder or grater, even when one plans to eat the item immediately. The *Beur Halakha* (321:12, s.v. *midei*) notes that the prohibition applies specifically to a **utensil designated specifically for grinding**, whereas cutting **with a knife** for immediate consumption is permitted, as implied by the statement of the Rivash himself. The *Beur Halakha* writes:

The rulings of all of the halakhic authorities imply that in our case, even when one cuts with a knife, it is permitted. The reason, the *Peri Megadim* comments, is that just as with regard to Selecting, it is considered part of the process of eating when one selects by hand to eat for immediate use, here too, it is considered **part of the process of eating even when one cuts with a knife to eat for immediate use**, because it is part of the process of eating to

use a knife. The same does not apply when one cuts with a utensil specifically designated for grinding, such a cheese grater . . . because then it is comparable to [using] a sieve or a sifter, in which case it is considered Selecting even [if done] for immediate use.

The *Beur Halakha* maintains that the leniency to cut for immediate use is because the cutting is **part of the process of eating**. Therefore, when one cuts with a knife, this is part of the process of eating, whereas cutting with a specially designed utensil is a manner of grinding and not part of the process of eating.

Chopping with a cleaver is a dispute among the authorities

In light of the above considerations, the *Beur Halakha* (ad loc.) raises a question: May one cut up onions with a large knife designated specifically for chopping, such as a cleaver? The *Mishna Berura*



Some permit chopping with a cleaver, while others prohibit it.

concludes (45) that the use of this implement on Shabbat is prohibited, both because it might be considered a utensil specifically designated for grinding, and perhaps also due to its being a week-day-like activity. By contrast, the *Arukh*

*HaShulhan* (321:9) permits the use of such a knife:

I have seen that some question this and prohibit cutting onions with a cleaver. This is not clear to me at all, **as this is also a knife**. The Rivash is concerned about grating cheese with a grater because this is designated to grind food into small pieces as fine as flour; and this is definitely included in the labor of Grinding. By contrast, a cleaver merely has a curved blade, and it is equivalent to a regular knife. Why, then, should we say that the Jewish women are acting contrary to *halakha*?

According to this opinion, a utensil of this kind, which does not grind but only cuts, is comparable to a **kitchen knife, not a food grinder**. He adds that Jewish women commonly use such an implement on Shabbat.