

Grinding a previously ground item

The *Yere'im* (274) writes, citing the **Rashbam**, that it is permitted to crumble bread on Shabbat, as the bread is made from flour that has already been ground:

Rashbam: There is no Grinding after Grinding

Crumbling bread is permitted, since it has already been ground, and **we have not found** [that] **grinding after grinding** [is prohibited]. I have seen this written in the name of Rabbeinu Yosef, from the commentary of Rabbeinu Shmuel, may the memory of both be for a blessing.

The *Semag* (Prohibition 65, *Tohen*) cites the same ruling of the **Rashbam** (see also **Ran**, 32a Rif, s.v. *amar Rav Pappa*). Conversely,

in his **Responsa** (4:75), the **Rashba** implies that the prohibition of Grinding does apply:

QUESTION: Is it permitted to crumble bread on Shabbat in order to feed chickens?

ANSWER: It stands to reason that [the Gemara prohibits] chopping beets only if one chops them into very small pieces in order to eat them the next day, or even on that day but sometime later... But [if one does so in order] to eat it immediately, it is permitted, as the Sages did not prohibit a person to eat their food in large pieces or small ones... And therefore, even to crumble it before chickens, who depend upon you for food, is permitted for immediate use, as one may prepare food.

Rashba: There is Grinding after Grinding

Accordingly, the **Rashba** permits one to crumble bread for chickens only just before feeding them, since he maintains that grinding for immediate use is permitted, as stated above (pp. 977–978). This indicates that the fact that the bread has already been ground does not permit one to crumble it. The *Mishne LaMelekh* (*Hilkhos Hametz UMatza* 1:3) also understands the **Rashba** in this manner, and he adds that this is the opinion of the **Rambam** as well (*Hilkhos Hametz UMatza* 3:8, and *Maggid Mishne* ad loc.), that there is a prohibition of grinding after grinding.

The *halakha* is in accordance with the lenient opinion

The **Rema** (321:12) rules leniently, that Grinding does not apply to a previously ground item:

It is permitted to crumble bread for chickens. Since it has already been ground, there is no concern, as there is no grinding after grinding.

Therefore, one may crumble bread, matza, or cookies on Shabbat.²⁴ As noted earlier,



Grinding a baked food that was made from a ground substance is permitted.

The *halakha* for Sephardim

24. The *Shulhan Arukh* does not mention this *halakha*, but in the *Beit*

(pp. 988–990) it is prohibited to grind with a grater or some other utensil especially designated for grinding. The *Beur Halakha* concurs (321, s.v. *lefarer lehem*).

The reason for the leniency: The second grinding is not significant

Why is there no prohibition of Grinding with regard to a previously ground item? The *Vilna Gaon* (ad loc.) writes that this leniency is derived from the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer in the *Tosefta* (15:14): One may rub that which has been rubbed, lay out that which has been laid out, bake that which has been baked, and cook that which has been cooked. According to the Vilna Gaon, the leniency that there is no grinding after grinding is **part of a general principle** that carrying out the same act on the same item a second time is not regarded as the performance of labor. Just as there is no cooking after cooking, as there is no significance to cooking a food that has already been cooked (see pp. 363–364), the same applies to a food that has already been ground: The second act of grinding is not significant. The *Shevitat HaShabbat* is also of this opinion (*Tohen*, Introduction, 7).

Yosef (321, s.v. *assur lahtokh*) he cites the *Rishonim* who rule leniently in this regard, without noting that there are dissenting opinions. Consequently, according to the basic *halakha* Sephardim may also follow the lenient ruling, and the *Ben Ish Hai* concurs (Year 2, *Mishpatim* 1). Rav Ovadia Yosef (*Kol Sinai*, 1971, pp. 304–305; see also *Yalkut Yosef* 321:10) writes that although strictly speaking one may be lenient, it is preferable to crumble the food just before eating, as one can thereby also rely on the opinion of the Rashba. The *Menuḥat Ahava* also writes (vol. 2, 8:5, and note 28) that since the Rashba is stringent with regard to grinding after grinding, and this issue potentially involves a prohibition by Torah law, it is best to crumble the food just before the meal, especially as this does not entail a great inconvenience; yet, in exigent circumstances one may follow the lenient ruling of the majority of the authorities. Therefore, according to the basic *halakha* Sephardim may be as lenient with regard to grinding after grinding as Ashkenazim are, but for them there is reason to be stringent and to do so only just before the meal. It should be noted that it is possible to infer the opinion of the *Shulḥan Arukh* with regard to grinding after grinding from his statement concerning peeling dry mud from an item of clothing (302:7), but it is likely that that case is not considered grinding after grinding, as explained in the next note.

A different reason:
The prohibition
of Grinding does
not apply to an
artificial bond

The *Hazon Ish* (57, s.v. *inyan*) explains this principle differently:

There is no [prohibition of] Grinding in the case of bread because Grinding includes only breaking down a natural bond; separating a constructed bond is not included in the category of Grinding. This is true even when the bond holds together a substance which has never gone through the process of grinding, but which came into the world in a discrete form.

According to the *Hazon Ish*, the leniency is not due to the grinding that has been performed in the past, but because of what occurred afterward, as the ground items were combined artificially rather than naturally. The *Hazon Ish* maintains that the prohibition of Grinding applies only when breaking down a **natural bond**, whereas breaking a **constructed bond** is not included in the labor of Grinding.²⁵ It seems that in his opinion, only an item that has been formed in a natural manner is considered one unit, and therefore may not be broken down. An item that has been combined by human agency is not halakhically considered a proper unit, and therefore the prohibition of Grinding does not apply to it.

A naturally ground
substance

Does the principle that there is no grinding after grinding apply only to an item that has previously passed through a **process of grinding**? What about an item that was **initially in granular form**,

25. In accordance with the explanation of the *Hazon Ish*, one can understand the prohibition against crumbling dirt or mud. The *Gemara* in *Beitza* (7b) and Rashi ad loc. (s.v. *veha ka avid*) imply that one who crushes clods of earth is liable due to Grinding. The *Shulḥan Arukh* likewise states that peeling dry mud off an item of clothing is prohibited due to Grinding (302:7; *Mishna Berura* concurs, ad loc., 36). *Rabbi Akiva Eiger* (on *Shulḥan Arukh* ad loc.) raises a difficulty: Since the dirt or mud was previously in powder form, and subsequently coalesced into a single mass only upon drying, its grinding should be permitted due to the principle that there is no grinding after grinding. In accordance with the explanation of the *Hazon Ish*, one can answer that as the dirt or mud were joined naturally, not through human agency, the prohibition of Grinding applies to them. This resolution is suggested by several *Aḥaronim* (*Shemirat Shabbat KeHilkhata* 6, note 26; *Menuḥat Ahava* 2:8, note 32).

from which one formed a single mass? For example, may one crumble a **sugar cube**? Sugar was initially in a granular state, yet this was not due to an act of grinding but simply because that is its natural state.

According to the *Hazon Ish*, it is clear that it is immaterial whether the item becomes separated by human activity or natural intervention; in every case where the bond is formed by human action, the prohibition of Grinding does not apply to it. Thus, the *Hazon Ish* explicitly writes (ad loc.) that “a separation of a bond formed by human agency is not included in Grinding, even if one bonded together a substance that had never been ground, but which started as separate entities.” According to the understanding of the **Vilna Gaon** this matter is not clear: Does the leniency apply only when **an action of grinding** has been performed, as there is no grinding after grinding, or perhaps the leniency applies **to everything that was once in granular form**, as there is no significance to its being ground anew.

Perhaps one can resolve this question from a statement of the **Rema**. The *Shulḥan Arukh* (321:8) rules that one may grind **clumps of salt** only in an unusual manner. The **Rema** limits this ruling (based on *Tosafot*, *Beitza* 14a, s.v. *Beit Hillel*).

It is specifically [grinding] coarse salt [that is prohibited], but [in the case of] salt which was originally fine and was then cooked and formed clumps, it is permitted to cut it with a knife, just as one cuts bread.

The **Rema** permits one to crush **salt** that was formed as fine grains before clumping, since there is no grinding after grinding, as is the *halakha* with regard to bread. This implies that the leniency applies even to an item which began in a powdered form: It is permitted to grind again anything that **was once in a powder state**. The



It is permitted to crumble sugar cubes or clumps of sugar, but one may not make powdered sugar.

It is permitted to crumble clumps of salt and sugar

prohibition of Grinding applies only to a solid body that is being crumbled for the first time, as emphasized by the *Peri Megadim* (*Mishbetzot Zahav* 321:10):

And know that Grinding applies only to an item that grew from the ground and that was initially a single entity.

Powdered sugar

The *Mishna Berura* (ad loc., 30) adds that **sugar** has the same status as salt for the purposes of this *halakha*. Therefore, one may crumble a clump of sugar or a sugar cube, since the sugar was originally granular. By contrast, it is prohibited to transform sugar into **powdered sugar**, since this is an entirely new act of grinding, as the grains of sugar had never previously been powder.

Tablets

Similarly, it is permitted to crush **tablets** or pills, as these were initially in the form of powder, and only subsequently consolidated into a tablet. The *Shemirat Shabbat KeHilkhata* rules similarly (33:4).

Is it permitted to crumble chocolate?

Is it permitted to crumble chocolate? Ostensibly, this should be permitted, as in the process of manufacturing chocolate the substance is liquefied before solidifying again, and therefore one can apply the principle that there is no grinding after grinding. It should certainly be permitted according to the opinion of the *Hazon Ish*, because the binding of the chocolate is accomplished through human agency.

When the initial grinding is negated, is it permitted to grind?

Nevertheless, it is unclear if one may be lenient. The *Yerushalmi* states (7:2) that one who grinds earthenware is liable due to Grinding. One can ask: Since earthenware is made from soil, which was originally granular, why doesn't the principle that there is no grinding after grinding apply here? The *Shevitat HaShabbat* (*Tohen*, Introduction, 7) answers this question, teaching an important element of the principle that there is no grinding after grinding:



It is permitted to crush tablets.

This is comparable to Cooking, as we rule that there is cooking after cooking, and yet if the first act of cooking has been undone, then there is cooking after cooking; just as one who re-forges metal that has already been forged and has hardened... The same applies to Grinding... with regard to earthenware that has been hardened, **the first grinding has been nullified**, and therefore the prohibition of Grinding does apply.

In other words, with regard to Cooking there are situations where the first act of cooking loses its significance, and in such cases there is cooking after cooking. For example, when a previously forged piece of metal is forged anew, no trace of the first forging remains, and therefore one is liable. According to many *Rishonim*, the same applies to boiled liquids that have cooled (see pp. 364–366). This reasoning can be applied to Grinding: **If the first act of grinding has been nullified**, one who grinds the substance again is liable. Consequently, one who grinds earthenware is liable. Granted, earthenware is formed from crumbled dirt, but ultimately it is formed into an entity as hard as stone, with no signs of its previous state as dirt, and therefore the prohibition of Grinding applies.

Accordingly, there is room to prohibit crumbling chocolate, as at the end of its production process it returns to its original solid state. It can therefore be said that the first grinding has been voided, and consequently the prohibition of Grinding is once again applicable.

In the case of chocolate, the grinding is apparently negated

In practice, there is room to be stringent in this regard even according to the *Hazon Ish*, who maintains that it is permitted to crumble items that have been bonded through human actions. The *Hazon Ish* contends that an artificial bond is not considered a true bond, and therefore it is permitted to undo it. But when people create **a chemical compound that is of one actual piece**, it is possible that even the *Hazon Ish* would concede that the substance is considered one entity, and therefore it is prohibited to crumble it. In addition, the hardening of the chocolate is not an entirely artificial process, as the chocolate is simply allowed to solidify and harden in its natural way. Consequently, there is room to prohibit grinding chocolate even

according to the *Hazon Ish*. Indeed, the *Orehot Shabbat* rules that one may not crumble chocolate (4:21, and note 35). Even according to this opinion it is permitted to crumble the chocolate in an unusual manner, e.g., with a spoon or the handle of a knife, as stated above.

The *Shemirat Shabbat KeHilkhata*: It is permitted to crumble chocolate

By contrast, the *Shemirat Shabbat KeHilkhata* (6, note 26) accepts the opinion of the *Shevitat HaShabbat*, and yet he rules that it is permitted to crumble chocolate even in the usual manner (ad loc., 11):



One may be lenient and crumble chocolate.

[With regard to] foods that one prepares from ground substances, such as bread, matza, and cookies, it is permitted to restore them to a crumbled state on Shabbat with a utensil that is not designated for this purpose... and the same applies to chocolate, lumps of sugar, or clumps of salt that have formed due to moisture.

Apparently he maintains that although the chocolate is solid and hard, its original grinding is not considered nullified, as the texture of chocolate is greatly affected by the fact that it was formerly in a liquid state, and it is entirely dissimilar to the original texture of the cacao beans. This is analogous to a sugar cube, to which the labor of Grinding does not apply even though it is hard, as stated earlier, because the grains of sugar are distinct and the texture of the cube is formed around them, and therefore one cannot say that the ground state is entirely negated.²⁶ This is in contrast to earthenware, which

26. It should be noted that the *Shevitat HaShabbat* (*Tohen, Be'er Rehovot* 43), in light of his novel opinion cited above, prohibits crumbling sugar cubes, as they are hard as stone. He apparently maintains that the *halakha* takes into account only the current texture of the item in question, whether it is hard as stone or soft and easily crumbled; there is no attempt to compare its current state with its previous one. According to this understanding, it stands to reason that one should be stringent with regard to chocolate as well. Yet, as stated, the *Mishna Berura* permits one to crumble sugar, and it

has undergone a significant chemical transformation, and there is no trace of the fact that it was fashioned from dirt.

IN PRACTICE, it seems that one may rely on the opinion of the *Shemirat Shabbat KeHilkhata* and crumble chocolate, as one cannot really say that the original grinding was negated and that this is the creation of a “new entity.” One may not grind the chocolate with a grater or any other utensil specially designated for grinding, as explained above.

As a matter of practical *halakha* one may be lenient

IN CONCLUSION, the halakhic consensus is that it is permitted to grind an item that was made from a powdered substance, and therefore one may grind bread, cookies, and similar items. It is also permitted to crumble a clump of sugar, salt, or chocolate, or to crush a tablet. Nevertheless, one may not perform this grinding with a utensil designated for that purpose, nor may one render it more finely ground than it had been in its original state. Consequently, one may not turn sugar into powdered sugar.

Summary

seems that in his opinion the initial grinding of an item is negated only if no trace is left of its ground state, and if that state has no effect on its current form. This is not the case with regard to chocolate, which is essentially a liquid that has hardened; it is difficult to ignore the connection between its present hardness and its former liquid state.

