The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן רנ"ז סעיף ב'-ג'

Overview

Siman 257 Seif 2:

Even a food that is fully cooked may not be insulated on Shabbos even in a material that does not add heat. However, it is permitted to place utensils over a food to protect it from mice or so that it should not become dirty from dirt since one's intent is not to heat the food; rather the intent is to protect it. It is also permitted to place a cover on a pot (See above siman 253).

- In other words one may place garments on a pot that prevent the food from cooling down as long as that is not one's intent. (M.B. 14)

Siman 257 Seif 3:

The following are materials that add heat: refuse of olives and sesame, fertilizer, slat, lime and sand whether they are moist or whether they are dry. Straw, grape refuse, soft materials and grass add heat when they are moist. The following are materials that do not add heat: garments, fruit, dove's feathers (or other feathers)**, tufts of linen and sawdust.** Some maintain that it is permitted to insulate a food in rocks even though they add heat since the practice is uncommon and thus not subject to the Rabbinic injunction.

- Regarding sesame and the other materials enumerated here it is prohibited to insulate in that material but if one insulated the pot in a permitted material, e.g. a box of wool, the box may be placed on sesame or other material. The insulated box may not be placed on olive refuse since it adds heat through the box to the pot of food. (M.B. 15)
- Anything soft is called מוכין. (M.B. 17)
- Straw and grape refuse are considered a single item. (M.B. 18)
- Shulchan Aruch does not seem to distinguish whether it is moist naturally or whether it was moistened externally but many later authorities agree that the moisture must be natural rather than from an external source. (M.B. 19)
- The same is true concerning pillow and sheets or clumps of wool. (M.B. 20)
- Examples of fruit are grains and legumes. (M.B. 21)
- Rema refers to small stones used to produce fire. Maharshal writes that warm dirt is not a material that adds heat and it is permitted to insulate a pot in it. (M.B. 24)

Halacha Highlight

Pot covers and aluminum foil

Shulchan Aruch Siman 257 Seif 2
כדי לשמרו מן העכברים
In order to protect it from mice

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ב') writes that one may not insulate a food on Shabbos even if the food is fully cooked and the insulating material does not add heat to the food. However, he does permit placing a utensil over a food to protect it from rodents or from dirt falling into the food since this is not considered insulating the food to retain heat, it is merely protecting the food. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ד) emphasizes that included in the allowance to cover a food for its protection is to place garments on the pot that will retain the temperature of the food. The reason it is permitted is that one's intent is the protection of the food rather than to insulate it. Along these lines, Rav Moshe Feinstein (שו"ת אג"מ או"ח ח"א סי' צ"ה ד"ה אבל ליתן) permits placing a pot cover over a pot of food even though one's intent is to preserve the heat of the food. Mishnah Berurah's explanation that placing garments is permitted because one's intent is to protect the food implying that if one's intent was to preserve the heat of the food it would not be permitted is limited to placing something that normally is not placed on the food. Since it is common practice to place a pot cover on a pot it does not give the appearance of insulating the food and thus is permitted.

Whether it is permitted to wrap a food in aluminum foil is subject to debate. According to Rav Moshe Feinstein, (שם ח"ד סי' ע"ד הטמנה אות ג') wrapping food in aluminum foil is an act of insulating and thus prohibited. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שו"ת מנחת שלמה ח"ב סי' ל"ד אות ז'), on the other hand considers wrapping a food in aluminum foil similar to putting a cover on a pot.