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Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן ש"ב סעיף ז'-ח'

Overview

Removing mud from a garment

Shulchan Aruch Siman 302 Seif 7

טיט שעל בגדו

Mud that is on one's garment

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ז') discusses the circumstances in which it is permitted for one to remove dirt from his garment. He rules that one may grasp two sections of the inside of the garment and rub them together since it does not appear as though one is cleansing (ליבון) the garment. One may not rub the garment in this manner from the outside since it appears as though he is cleansing the garment. One may also scrape the dirt with one's fingernail on the outside since this does not resemble cleansing the garment (מ"ב ס"ק ל"ד). Shulchan Aruch then cites authorities who maintain that the previous rulings are limited to where the mud is wet but if it is dry it is prohibited since it is considered grinding (טוחן). Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק ל"ו) notes that since he does not intend to grind the mud it is only a melacha she'aina tzricha l'gufa but nevertheless even a melacha she'aina tzricha l'gufa is Rabbinically prohibited. One may, however, ask a gentile to scrape off the dry mud.

Some authorities question this concern from Rema's ruling (סי' שכ"א סע' ח' וי"ב) that once something has been ground it is no longer subject to the prohibition of grinding (ע' העהות רעק"א שהקשה כן). A principle of Chazon Ish can resolve this question. Chazon Ish (או"ח סי' נ"ז ד"ה ענין) maintains that the principle that once something was ground it is no longer subject to the prohibition of grinding is limited to something that was recombined by a person. For example, the prohibition of grinding does not apply to bread. Once the wheat kernel was ground and then recombined by the person making the bread, this principle teaches that the prohibition no longer applies. When a ground material recombines on its own, e.g. pieces of dirt combining into mud, the prohibition remains in force. In the event that one is uncertain whether the dirt will become ground as it is removed, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שמירת שבת כהלכתה פט"ו הע' צ"ח) ruled that it is permitted to remove the dirt since one does not intend to grind the dirt and it is not inevitable.

Halacha Highlight

Siman 302 Seif 7:

Mud on one's garment may be rubbed off from the inside since it is not evident that one is cleansing the garment but one may not rub it from the outside since that resembles cleansing the garment. One may scratch the mud with one's fingernail. Some explain that this applies when the mud is wet but if it is dry it is prohibited since it involves grinding.

- In other words, one grasps the inside of the garment near the mud and rubs the material until the mud comes off. (M.B. 32)
- One improves the garment by doing so. (M.B. 33)
- One may scratch the mud even from the outside since it does not resemble laundering. (M.B. 34)
- One may not scratch or rub dry dirt even from the inside. (M.B. 35)
- Although it is a melacha she'aina tzricha l'gufa it is prohibited but one may ask a gentile to do so. Taz maintains that if there is just an appearance of dirt rather than any actual substance it is permitted. In my opinion this position is questionable since it resembles laundering. Even according to Taz it is only permitted for one to scratch or rub the material from the inside but it is prohibited to rub it from the outside. (M.B. 36)

Siman 302 Seif 8:

One may not scrape (with a knife or a fingernail) **his shoe, whether new or old since he will peel off some leather and therefore is considered ממחק—scraping hides.**

- Even if his intent is to remove mud since it is inevitable that some of the leather will peel off. (M.B. 37)
- This is true even if he uses the back of the knife. (M.B. 38)