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Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן ש"ב סעיף ט'

Overview

Siman 302 Seif 9:

It is permitted to put water on a shoe to rinse it but to wash it by rubbing one side against the other is prohibited. A garment that is dirty may not even be rinsed since that constitutes laundering. One may only wipe it gently with a rag but not with force out of concern that one will squeeze out liquid. If a garment is clean one may put on a small amount of water but not a large amount out of concern that one will squeeze out the water. Some prohibit it this under all circumstances.

- Libun applies to any material that is commonly cleansed. The quantity to cleanse that violates the prohibition is a string four tefachim in length. Laundering a garment is a toladah of cleansing as is squeezing out liquid from a piece of material. Laundering applies to soft leather and in the opinion of some even to hard leather. Regarding the principle that soaking is the same as laundering, there are those who maintain that it is true only when the garment is dirty but if it is not dirty it is not considered laundering although it would be Rabbinically prohibited to soak a garment. According to others even if the garment is not dirty the principle that soaking is the equivalent of laundering applies but if one wet the garment in a manner that soils the garment, for example, one wiped his hands with a cloth after washing them, the principle does not apply. Some authorities adopt a more stringent position and maintain that if one uses a large quantity of water one violates the prohibition even if the garment becomes soiled. (M.B. 39)
- One's intent is to pour a small amount of water to remove the dirt. (M.B. 40)
- The wording implies that laundering does not apply to shoes but in Biur Halacha we explained that laundering is prohibited and one may only rinse his shoes. (M.B. 41)
- It is prohibited to put even a small amount of water on the garment. (M.B. 44)
- Soaking constitutes laundering only when the garment is dirty but one may nevertheless not pour a large quantity of water even on a clean garment out of concern that one will squeeze out the garment. If one intends to launder the garment one may not even pour a small amount of water on it. (M.B. 46)
- If the garment is often left wet and one does not care that it is there, the concern that he will squeeze out the water does not apply. (M.B. 47)
- This opinion maintains that soaking is considered laundering even if the garment is not dirty but if the water is added in a manner that soils the material it is permitted. One should be cautious regarding this opinion since it relates to a Biblical mitzvah. (M.B. 48)

Halacha Highlight

Washing garments made from synthetic material

Shulchan Aruch Siman 302 Seif 9

מתר לתן מים על גבי מנעל לשכשכו

It is permitted to put water on one's shoe in order to rinse it

Shulchan Aruch rules that although it is permitted to rinse one's leather shoes on Shabbos, one may not launder them by rubbing them against one another to remove the dirt. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק מ"א) notes that Shulchan Aruch's wording implies that if one does not rub them against one another in the manner of launderers there would not be any prohibition violated if one launders his shoes. However, in Biur Halacha he explains that even laundering without rubbing them against one another is prohibited and all that is permitted is for one to rinse his shoes. When it comes to articles made from wood, all opinions agree that it is not subject to the prohibition of laundering.

Rav Moshe Feinstein (אג"מ יו"ד ח"ב סי' ע"ו) writes that garments that are not woven, e.g., something made from sheets of nylon or other synthetic material are not technically subject to the prohibition of laundering since they do not absorb liquid. However, since the issue was not discussed by earlier authorities one should be stringent and treat them as one would leather. Rav Nissim Karelitz (ארחות שבת פי"ג סע' ו') permits wearing rubber gloves when washing dishes. Since one who wears them does not intend to launder them, it is not considered to be an act of laundering even though they come in contact with soap and water. Minchas Yitzchok (ח"ו סי' כ"ג) expresses uncertainty whether one may wear rubber gloves when washing dishes but rules that if a woman has sores on her hands she may adopt a lenient position and wear gloves when washing dishes. She must be careful, however, not to wash the gloves when she finishes the dishes. If a garment is made from strips of synthetic material woven together, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שלחן שלמה בשולי הגליון ס"ק י"ט) rules that it is treated the same as any other garment since the water penetrates through and becomes trapped between the threads.