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Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן שי"ד סעיף ז'-י'

Overview

Siman 314 Seif 7:

When the cover of a utensil, for example, a carriage, box or closet, is tied in place with a rope, it is permitted to untie it, cut it with a rope or undo its braid. This is true only regarding a knot on a rope or something similar but a cover made of wood or metal may not be unraveled or broken since they are utensils and are subject to full-fledged construction or demolition. For this reason it is prohibited to remove hinges called גונזי"ש from the back of a box if the key was lost but some authorities permit this. Some authorities permit breaking the cover of a box while others prohibit it and one may be lenient and ask a gentile to do it.

- In other words the top is tied in place with a rope. (M.B. 29)
- It is not a permanent knot since the intent is to remove it regularly. (M.B. 30)
- Breaking a cover made from wood or metal is full-fledged demolition which applies even to utensils. (M.B. 31)
- Biur Halacha notes that according to Rambam unraveling the rope is prohibited. (M.B. 32)
- Returning a door to its hinge is prohibited since it involves construction. (M.B. 33)
- This opinion maintains that it is inferior demolition since one does not have to break anything. According to all opinions it is prohibited to affix hinges or locks with nails to a utensil since that involves fashioning a utensil. (M.B. 34)
- This opinion maintains that demolition does not apply to utensils at all. Although Shulchan Aruch subscribes to the position that it is prohibited, he cites the lenient opinion to indicate that one may rely on it to ask a gentile to do it. (M.B. 36)
- Some maintain that this is permitted only in the face of a financial loss or if one is pressured to fulfill a *mitzvah*. (M.B. 37)

Siman 314 Seif 8:

Utensils containing dates and dried figs, if the cover is tied with a rope one may untie, dismantle the ropes braids or even cut it with a rope and one may do so even to the cover itself since this is similar to opening a nut or almond in order to take the food that is inside.

- It is teaching that one may even break the actual cover as explained in *seif* 7. (M.B. 39)
- This allowance is limited to these utensils that are not full-fledged utensils since they are made to ripen dates. (M.B. 40)

Siman 314 Seif 9:

It is permitted to unravel and cut the knots around the spit that is tied to a roasted lamb or bird.

- This does not involve מחתך since one does not cut it to size. One who chops wood into large pieces has only violated the Rabbinic injunction against performing weekday activities. If they are chopped into small pieces he has violated the prohibition against grinding and if he is particular about the size he has violated the prohibition against מחתך. (M.B. 41)

Siman 314 Seif 10:

Covers attached to the ground, for example, the door to a pit that is tied with a rope, may be untied since it is not a permanent knot being that it is meant to be untied but one may not unravel or cut it since that violates the prohibition of demolition. This applies only when the intent was that it would not be removed on Shabbos but if it is not intended to last at all, it is permitted. For this reason it is permitted to remove a board placed in front of an oven and smeared with clay since it is not intended to be permanent.

- Since it is attached to the ground it is subject to the prohibitions of construction and demolition. (M.B. 43)

Halacha Highlight

Separating containers

Shulchan Aruch Siman 314 Seif 9
מתר להפקיע
It is permitted to unravel

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ט') rules that it is permitted to cut the knot that goes around a spit used to roast a lamb or bird. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק מ"א) explains that cutting the knot does not violate the prohibition of מחתך, literally cutting, since that prohibition is violated only when one intends to cut something to a particular size. If one cuts something without regard to the size of the cut pieces he does not violate this prohibition.

Often out of convenience manufacturers will manufacture containers that are attached. For example, in Eretz Yisroel containers of pudding or leben are often manufactured in a way that two or more containers are attached to one another, but the connection between them is scored so that the different containers could be easily separated from one another. *Poskim* debate the permissibility of separating the different containers from one another. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (ארחות שבת ח"א פי"א סע' מ"ב) rules that it is permitted to separate the containers. Even though one separates them where it is scored so that the containers separate cleanly from one another, the intent of the person separating the containers is not to specifically separate them so that they should be a particular size. The only reason people separate the containers where it is scored is because that is the most convenient place to separate them and thus it is not considered as though he separated them with a concern that they should be a particular size. Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (ארחות שבת שם) adopts a stringent position about this matter. Since the containers separate from one another in a very uniform manner and people intend to separate them at that specific place, it is considered as though he is particular about the size of the cut pieces. Rav Shmuel HaLevi Wosner (קובץ מבית לוי ח"ו עמ' מ"ה) maintains that since the place to separate the containers is marked, making it easy to separate them from one another it does not constitute a Biblical prohibition, nevertheless, since it appears similar to the *melacha* of מחתך it is Rabbinically prohibited.