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Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Sun, Feb 25 2024 ■ ט"ז אדר א' תשפ"ד
סימן שכ"א סעיף ח'-י"א

Overview

Siman 321 Seif 8:

One may not grind salt with a wooden pestle but he may crush it with the handle of a knife or with a wooden pot ladle without compunction. The restrictions apply to thick coarse salt but fine salt that was cooked into coarse pieces may be cut with a knife similar to the allowance to cut bread.

- Certainly, one may not use a stone pestle even if one intends to use it right away. (M.B. 26)
- It should be crushed on a plate or on the table. (M.B. 28)
- It is permitted even if it is cut very fine, similar to the allowance for bread, since ground foods are not subject to further grinding. Pri Megadim writes that sugar shares the same halacha as salt for this matter. (M.B. 30)

Siman 321 Seif 9:

It is permitted to finely cut with a knife meat that was cooked or roasted but it is prohibited to finely cut meat before birds. Since they cannot eat it unless it is finely cut one would be rendering it into food. (See below *siman* 324).

- Even if one must cut it because it is too tough for him to chew and swallow and by cutting it he renders it edible it is permitted since for this matter we follow the majority of the population. (M.B. 32)
- One could explain that the reason grinding does not apply to foods is that it does not require grinding but when a food does require grinding to be edible it may not be ground. This refers to where it is cut and will be fed to the birds later but if it is will be fed to them immediately it is permitted. (M.B. 33)
- It says there that making something edible is permitted but one may not cut it too fine. (M.B. 35)

Siman 321 Seif 10:

It is prohibited to grind cheese on Shabbos with a dented grater that has sharp teeth called a ראלייו.

- This resembles a weekday activity and thus even if one intends to eat it immediately it is prohibited. It is permitted to cut it finely with a knife. (M.B. 36)

Siman 321 Seif 11:

It is permitted to wet something that is detached from the ground so that it should not wither.

- In other words, cut vegetables. The reason is that since they were edible it is permitted to wet them but if it was not otherwise edible it is prohibited since one may not exert himself for something that is not a food. Wetting something attached to the ground is Biblically prohibited. (M.B. 37)

Halacha Highlight

Grinding mud

Shulchan Aruch Siman 321 Seif 8

אין כותתין מלח במדוך של עץ

It is forbidden to grind salt with a wooden pestle

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ח') prohibits grinding salt with a wooden pestle. Rema explains that Shulchan Aruch refers to coarse salt but salt that was ground fine and after cooking crystalized into coarse pieces may be cut with a knife in the way that it is permitted to cut bread into very fine pieces. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ל) explains that it is permitted to cut salt that is coarse as long as it began as fine pieces since once something was ground it is no longer subject to the prohibition against grinding (אין טוחן אחר טוחן).

Rav Akiva Eiger (סי' ש"ב סע' ז') questions this ruling from Shulchan Aruch's earlier ruling (סי' ש"ב סע' ז' ובמ"ב שם ס"ק ל"ו) that it is prohibited to crumble mud from one's garment because this involves grinding. Seemingly, mud is comprised of small pieces of dirt that fused together in water. Since the mud began as separate pieces it should not be subject to the prohibition of grinding. Although the dirt may have never been ground, nonetheless, the principle means that something that already existed in small pieces is not subject to the prohibition of grinding even if the pieces fused together into a large clump (חזו"א סי' נ"ז).

Chazon Ish (שם) answers that the principle that once an item was ground it is no longer subject to further grinding is limited to small pieces that were combined together by man. Consequently, there is no prohibition against grinding bread since someone took the ground pieces of flour and fused them together by adding water and kneading it. When nature combines small pieces together into a large clump that clump is subject to the prohibition of grinding. Thus it is prohibited to scrape mud from a garment since mud is subject to the prohibition against grinding. Sefer Shevisas Shabbos (הקדמה למלאכת טוחן סק"ז) writes that the principle is limited to those things which even if combined into a clump remain easy to grind into small pieces. However, if the pieces fuse together in a way that one can no longer tell that the pieces were ever separate, the prohibition against grinding applies.