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Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Mon, Jul 1 2024 ■ כ"ה סיון תשפ"ד
סימן של"ז סעיף ג'-ד'

Halacha Highlight

Cleaning a spill

Shulchan Aruch Siman 337 Seif 3
ולא מדיחין אותו
Nor may it be washed

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ג') prohibits pouring oil on the ground as well as washing a floor. The practice of pouring oil on the ground was that they used to pour oil on the ground of the bathhouse and people would roll in the oil (מ"ב ס"ק ט"ו). The procedure for washing the ground was to plug up one hole so that the water would drain through a hole on the other side of the room and by doing so the water would run over the entire floor clearing it of the dirt that collected (מ"ב ס"ק ט"ז). The reason these activities are prohibited is that there is a concern that in doing so he will level the ground. This is even worse than sweeping the floor which some authorities permit since he is actively involved in improving the ground by pouring oil or washing the floor which raises a greater concern that he will notice holes in the ground and will forget that it is prohibited to fill holes on Shabbos and will level those holes (מ"ב שם). Even if the floor is paved, Shulchan Aruch prohibits oiling or washing the floor out of concern that it will lead one to do these activities to a dirt floor.

In the event that water spills on the floor, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שמירת שבת כהלכתה פכ"ג הע' כ"ז) permits one to use a wiper (so that there is no issue of *sechitah*) to push away the water. He explains that the injunction prohibits one from pouring water on the floor to clean it, but if water spilled by accident there is no issue to push it aside. Rav Nissim Karelitz (חוט שני ח"א פי"א עמ' צ"ז) agrees, but adds that when one pushes the water to the drain he must do so with a narrow stream but to push the water towards the drain in a wide manner so that the water covers a larger area is prohibited. He concludes that each circumstance must be considered separately whether it is considered as though it is being spread over a wide area or a small area.

Overview

Siman 337 Seif 3:

One may not pour oil on the ground or wash it, even if it is paved.

- The rationale behind these restrictions is the concern that one will level holes. This applies even according to the one who permits sweeping the floor and the reason is that once he is concerned to oil or clean the floor we are concerned that he will notice holes and level them. (M.B. 16)
- This was prohibited so that one does not oil or wash an unpaved floor. The reason sweeping was not prohibited for this reason is that sweeping constitutes a more essential need than washing or oiling the floor. Washing a wooden floor is even worse since one must also soak a rag which also involves laundering the rag. (M.B. 17)

Siman 337 Seif 4:

It is prohibited to arrange a barrel on the ground since it is heavy and one will inevitably fill in holes in the ground.

- Meaning one moves it on the ground until it rests properly as a result of moving the barrel. (M.B. 18)
- It is also prohibited to tilt the barrel to pour from it since that involves making a hole in the ground, rather it must be lifted before pouring from it. Even though the hole is destructive and is a *melacha she'aina tzricha l'gufa* it is nevertheless, Rabbinically prohibited. (M.B. 19)
- There is a disagreement whether it is permitted to even a barrel on a tiled floor. The *halachos* in this *siman* apply to Yom Tov as well. (M.B. 20)