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Digest
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Halacha Highlight

Cutting nails during *chol hamoed*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 532 Seif 1
מתר לטל צפרנים
It is permitted to cut one's nails

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') rules that it is permitted to cut one's nails during *chol hamoed*. Rema cites a dissenting opinion that maintains that it is prohibited. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ב) explains that this opinion maintains that just like Chazal were concerned that a person would enter Yom Tov looking unkempt with the expectation that they would shave during *chol hamoed*, so too, they were concerned that a person would refrain from cutting his nails before Yom Tov with the expectation that he would cut his nails during *chol hamoed*. Therefore, just as they prohibited shaving during *chol hamoed*, so too, they prohibited cutting one's nails during *chol hamoed*. Rema adds that the custom is to follow the stringent opinion about this matter unless one is cutting his nails in advance of immersing in which case it is permitted for the *mitzvah*. If a woman will immerse after Yom Tov, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שמירת שבת כהלכתה פס"ו הע' קל"ה) ruled that she may not cut her nails during *chol hamoed* and will have to do so after Yom Tov before immersing.

Be'er Heiteiv (סק"א) references Teshuvas Nachalas Shiva who ruled that one who trims his nails every *erev* Shabbos is permitted to trim his nails on *erev* Shabbos during *chol hamoed*. Teshuvas Shvus Yaakov (ח"א סי' י"ז) disagrees and argues that trimming one's nails during *chol hamoed* is only permitted for an actual *mitzvah* such as immersion but not for one who is merely accustomed to trimming his nails each *erev* Shabbos. Custom is in accordance with the Shvus Yaakov's stringent position and support for adopting the stringent opinion is the fact that the Mishnah Berurah does not cite Nachalas Shiva's lenient position (קובץ מבית לוי המובא בפסקי תשובות הע' 3). Mishnah Berurah (סק"ב) does, however, rule that one who cut his nails on *erev* Yom Tov may also trim them during *chol hamoed*. Although with regards to haircutting we do not permit one to shave during *chol hamoed* if he shaved *erev* Yom Tov, nevertheless, since anyways there are authorities who permit cutting one's nails during *chol hamoed*, we are lenient if one made sure to enter Yom Tov looking kempt by cutting his nails.

Overview

Siman 532 Seif 1:

It is permitted to cut one's nails, whether on his hands or feet, even with a scissors. Some authorities are stringent and prohibit and the custom is to be stringent and refrain from cutting them with a knife or scissors unless it is in preparation for immersion in which case they may be cut normally.

- It is certainly permitted to use a knife, one's hand or teeth. (M.B. 1)
- This opinion maintains that the concern for a person entering Yom Tov looking unkempt applies to one's nails as well and thus one must cut them before Yom Tov. If they were cut before Yom Tov, they may be cut on Yom Tov. (M.B. 2)
- It is permitted to cut them with one's hands or teeth. Cutting one's nails with his teeth is not categorized as repulsive. (M.B. 3)

Siman 532 Seif 2:

Any therapeutic treatment is permitted on *chol hamoed*.

- Meaning one may perform a full-fledged *melacha* for therapeutic reasons, even for one whose illness is not life threatening. (M.B. 5)