

ליקוטי ופסקי הלכות

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שע"י "חדר הזדאה" שכונת מנחת יצחק פעיה"ק ירושלם תובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

Halachos compiled by HaRav Chaim Bleier – Translated from the Hebrew edition by R' Zerachya Shicker

Opening Packages on Shabbos 2

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Opening Various Packages on Shabbos – 2 | Chayei Sarah 5781

200

Several Principles about Various Melachos

- In Issue 197, as an introduction to the topic of opening bottles on Shabbos, we presented several principles about various melachos, e.g., binyan/stirah for utensils (paragraph 2), disposable utensils (3), the melachah of makeh bepatish (4) including making a new opening in a container (5) – which applies to disposables (6) – and mechateich (10). In Issue 199, we presented several principles about the melachah of koreia (2), opening a sealed item (10), and the melachah of mocheik (14). In this final issue in the series, we will give many examples of opening all sorts of packages, storage containers, jars, and bottles which are built on the principles we have already mentioned.

Cartons and Cans

Drink Cartons Opened by Pulling a Ring

- Some drink cartons, e.g., of orange juice, almond or soy milk, etc., have a plastic ring under the cap. After the cap is unscrewed, the ring is pulled to disconnect the circular plastic seal in the built-in little spout at the top. This involves several issurim.
- Making an opening.** During the packaging process, the carton is first filled with its contents and then its seams are permanently sealed. To open it, the ring is removed to form a new opening. This is an issur of making a neat, new opening that is also meant for future use (Issue 197; paragraph 5), which applies to an inferior vessel, or "musteki," as well (ibid.; 6).
- Sealed item.** Before the carton is opened, it was a sealed item, and it is not opened at the spot that was originally open. It is therefore considered opening a sealed item, which is subject to a machlokes among the poskim. The machmir opinion (חזו"א) holds that it is assur to open it since doing so makes it into a vessel (199; 10). Even the meikel opinion only allows opening something that will not be used in the future. Something that will be used in the future, e.g., if some of the contents will remain inside the container for later use, is an issur of metakein mana (ibid.; 11).
- Solution.** Since the carton cannot be opened in the regular manner, one should make a small cut with a knife in the carton itself so as to make it defective. Then, all the contents should be immediately poured into another container and the carton should be discarded so that no constructive action was done to it (פיה פתחה בחכמה פ"ז אות י"ט).

Drink Carton Opened by Turning the Cap

- In some drink cartons, when the cap is twisted for the first time, a plastic piece is inserted into the top of the carton, creating a circular hole. This also involves several issurim: making a neat, new opening in a vessel, opening a sealed item with intent for continued use (as above), and constructive tearing (199; 2). Also, the cap is usually attached to the carton with fibers, so opening it is a problem of metakein mana on the cap itself (197; 21). Thus, the suggested way to open this type of carton is the same as above (5).

Drink Cans

- Some cans of drink, e.g., cans of Coca-Cola or beer, are opened by pulling a tab, which creates a neat opening. Some poskim say this is assur on Shabbos as it is a problem of opening a sealed item (פיה פתחה בחכמה פ"ח אות ב), though they acknowledge that there is no problem of making an opening since these cans are for one-time use (197; 6) and there is no problem of mechateich since these cans are normally thrown out right away (ibid., 197; 11).

- However, other poskim allow opening these cans on Shabbos since the container is secondary to the drink inside and has no individual importance whatsoever (הגרשו"א, שו"ת מנחת שלמה ח"ב סי' י"ב). It is not a problem of opening a sealed item since these cans are not reused (199; 12). Thus, one may drink from such a can until he is finished and then throw it out (שם).
- Still, it is best to empty the entire can into a cup immediately after opening it and then throw away the can. This is because if one does not drink it in one swig, it may be considered that he is using the can after opening it. Cans of beer at a shalom zachar, for example, which are meant to be drunk by multiple people and not all at once especially must be emptied right away.

Opening Cans of Concentrate

- We mentioned (199; 10) the discussion among the poskim about opening canned food on Shabbos. We wrote (paragraph 12) that one may open them as usual if he will completely empty them right away. However, some metal cans contain concentrate, e.g., from oranges, apples, mangoes, or the like, and are meant to be used as needed, a bit at a time. Also, they usually come with a plastic cover to preserve the contents. Since these cans, and by extension the opening made on Shabbos, are used for an extended amount of time, all poskim would agree that they may not be opened in the usual manner on Shabbos. The contents must be entirely emptied into another container right after they are opened (ארחות שבת פ"ב, ד).

Opening Various Plastic Containers

Bottle with Plastic Ring that Is Torn

- Some plastic bottles, e.g., bottles of oil or vinegar, have a plastic ring underneath the cap. This ring is pulled to tear a small plastic disc which was used to hermetically seal the bottle. Opening this on Shabbos is an issur of makeh bepatish and constructive tearing. Thus, one must make sure to open it before Shabbos.
- If it is necessary to open it on Shabbos, one can separate the entire plastic piece from the top of the bottle, for example by sticking a knife or the like between the bottle and the cover and completely removing it without any tearing.

Jars that Are Opened after Tearing a Plastic Sealing Strip

- Some plastic food jars can only be opened after pulling a plastic strip and tearing it off of the cap, e.g., jars of mayo, mustard, and the like. According to the poskim who allow opening drink bottles with plastic screw caps (197; 19), this is also muttar. However, we mentioned that many poskim do not allow this (ibid.; 21), and accordingly this strip should not be torn off on Shabbos.
- However, there is an easy solution. One can stick something sharp, e.g., a knife or fork tine, between the jar and the cover and lift the cover in such a way that it is opened with the strip, but without the strip being torn. If this is difficult, one can pierce the cover, tear the strip off, and throw the cover away (ibid.; 25).

Plastic Containers that Are Opened after Removing a Tab

- Many plastic containers, e.g., of ice cream, herring, salads, and dips, have a protruding hard, plastic rim around the container that rises over the edge. The only way the cover can be removed is by breaking a plastic tab, exposing a spot to place a finger and lift off the cover.

16. Usually, the cover can also be removed without breaking the tab by lifting the cover with a sharp knife. Because of this, removing the tab is not considered an absolute improvement and with no other choice, one may open it. However, some say it is assur to open on Shabbos due to metakein mana since breaking the tab eliminates the use of the container and cover (הגר"נ קרליץ, פיה פתחה בחכמה פ"א אות א). Thus, one should open it before Shabbos or lift the cover with a knife, as described above.

Packaged Disposables

- 17. **Plastic tissue packages.** One may not open a plastic tissue package on the designated spot since doing so makes a new opening. However, one may tear the whole package from a different spot, take out all the tissues, and throw away the package. Then, it is a destructive tearing if a neat opening is not made, which is muttar for a Shabbos need. The need for tissues is considered a need for the body, which is automatically considered a Shabbos need.
- 18. **Plastic bag of disposable utensils.** Similarly, one may open a plastic bag containing disposable utensils, e.g., plates, bowls, cutlery, cups, or the like. Here too one must make sure to tear the whole package and remove all the contents.

Removing Something Soft from Something Hard on Shabbos

Heter to Tear

- 19. **Leather on a barrel.** Once upon a time they would put a piece of hide over a barrel of wine to preserve the contents. The Tosefta says that one may tear the hide off the barrel to get to the wine inside (הובא (מ"ב סי' ש"ד סק"ה). Although regular hide is subject to the issur of koreia (ביאה"ל סי' ש"מ ס"ג ד"ה אין), here there is no issur even to tear the hide itself. Multiple reasons are given:
- 20. One reason is that the tearer's intent is only to remove the wine; he is not thinking about the hide at all. Also, this form of tearing ruins the hide. Therefore, this tearing is not considered the melachah of koreia – it is merely part of the usage of a barrel in order to get to the contents (חזו"א סי' נ"א סק"ג).
- 21. **Like a shell on food.** Some say the reason is that the hide that is attached over the food to preserve it is like a shell or peel covering a food or drink. Thus, it is not called a garment or hide and it is not subject to the issur of koreia (כללי מלאכות שבת דיני קורע) (שלא ע"מ לתפור ד"ה ולישב).

Wrapping over a Bottle

22. Based on this halachah about the hide over a barrel, one may tear the plastic or foil wrapping over the top of a wine bottle on Shabbos to expose the screw cap or cork (ארחות שבת פ"ב אות כ"א). Even if there is a dotted line for this purpose, one may tear it on the line since it is a destructive tearing. There is also no problem of mechateich since the wrapping serves no purpose and it is thrown out (פיה פתחה) (בבבכמה פ"ז אות ב', גליון 197 אות י"א).

Separating Something Soft from Something Hard

23. Even if the hide is attached to the barrel, there is no issur of koreia in removing it. This is because koreia only applies when tearing something soft itself or separating two soft things attached to each other, e.g., papers (199; 7). The same is not true when separating something soft, that can be torn with the hands, from something hard; they were never made as one item for the melachah of koreia to apply. Thus, one may remove the hide from a barrel even if it is attached; doing so is not a problem of koreia (ארחות שבת פ"ב) (העי' כ"א, פיה פתחה בבכמה פ"ב אות י).

Opening Yogurt, Cream Cheese, Chummus, Etc.

24. **Doesn't care if the foil tears.** If one does not care if the foil attached to the container of yogurt, cream cheese, leben, etc. tears, he may remove it whether it tears or whether he removes it whole. It has the

status of the hide on top of a barrel, which may be removed even by tearing (above, 19). Even if it does not tear, it is included in the heter since it is insignificant to the person (מאור השבת ח"ג מכתב ל"ה אות א'). [This is not a problem of opening a sealed item (199; 10) or making a new opening (197; 5) since the original opening never disappeared.]

25. **Makes sure not to tear.** Even if one wants to use the foil in the future and thus does not want it to tear, e.g., he will only remove it partially but he wants the rest to stay attached to the cup/container to preserve the remaining contents, e.g., chummus, techinah, sliced meat or pastrami, etc., he may separate the cover from the container. This is because there is no issur of koreia involved in removing something soft from something hard (above, 23).

Cans of Coffee, Formula

- 26. **Coffee can.** Under the cover of instant coffee cans or glass jars, there is a thin foil layer. One may remove it from the container, as it is muttar to remove something soft from something hard (above, 23). One may also tear the covering itself, like the hide on the barrel (19); he should just make sure not to tear letters.
- 27. **Formula can.** On cans of formula today, e.g. Materna, there is a thin soft aluminum cover attached to the actual container that is removed by pulling a tab. It may be removed on Shabbos since doing so is separating something soft from something hard.
- 28. However, there are containers of formula made by other companies with a thicker metal covering of the same material as the container that needs to be torn on a designated line, similar to some canned foods. Opening these in the usual manner is a problem of opening a sealed item and making a vessel with the intent for continued use (199;10). Thus, one who needs to open such a container on Shabbos must first make a hole at the bottom and then open it as usual and empty the contents into another container (199;13).

Opening Medicine Containers/Packaging

Bottles

29. Bottles of medicine or vitamins usually come with a cardboard, aluminum, or plastic cover attached to the top of the bottle, under the cap. This may be removed from the bottle, like the hide on top of a barrel (above, 23).

Card of Pills, Blister Pack

- 30. **Tearing letters.** When removing pills from a plastic card, one usually runs into an issue with tearing letters, as the name of the medication or company logo usually appears on the foil that is torn. Thus, one should check the package before Shabbos to see if there is a pill that can be removed as usual without tearing letters – sometimes a pill does not have letters over it – and then he can remove it on Shabbos. If there isn't, the foil should be opened before Shabbos.
- 31. **Tearing the plastic.** If one did not prepare before Shabbos or if the need to take a pill only arose on Shabbos and he cannot remove it without tearing the letters, he may tear or cut the clear plastic that the pill is in with a knife in order to remove the pill.

Tube of Cream

- 32. In many tubes of medicated cream, there is a metallic cover over the hole and the cream can only be removed after piercing the cover. One must make sure to open these before Shabbos, as piercing the metallic cover is an issur of making a new opening on Shabbos (197; 5) and of opening a sealed item that will not be immediately emptied and thrown away (199; 12). There is no problem of koreia since it is hard.
- 33. If there is a need to open one on Shabbos, it should be opened from the bottom. If the tube is made from metal and closed with folds, open the folds. If it is made from plastic, make a cut at the bottom of the plastic. Then, make the regular hole in the metal at the top and remove the contents from the hole at the top (פיה) (הגר"א פאלק, פיה) (פתחה בבכמה בירורי הלכה סי' ט).

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