

## CHAPTER XVII.

### REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE HANDLING OF UTENSILS AND FURNITURE ON THE SABBATH.

MISHNA: All utensils (and furniture) which may be handled on the Sabbath, their doors (lids) may be handled with them, even when their lids had been removed; for such lids cannot be considered as house-doors, which are not intended to be removed. One may take a hammer on the Sabbath for the purpose of cracking nuts, an axe to chop fig-cake, a hand-saw to saw cheese, a shovel to gather up dried figs, a fan and a fork to place a thing (food) before a child, a spindle and a shuttle to pick fruit, a sewing-needle to remove a splinter (from the flesh), and a packing needle to open a door.

GEMARA: "*All utensils which may be handled on the Sabbath, their doors (lids) may be handled with them, even when their lids had been removed.*" Removed when, on Sabbath? and if removed on a week-day they certainly may be handled? Why, on the contrary. On Sabbath the lids being attached to the utensils, they were intended for use with the utensils; but if removed on week-days, they did not form part of the utensils on the Sabbath, hence not intended for simultaneous use, and should not be handled! Said Abayi: The Mishna means to say, that the lids may be handled with the utensils on the Sabbath *even* if the lids had been removed *on a week-day*.

The rabbis taught: "The doors (lids) of a drawer, chest, or cage, may be taken down on the Sabbath, but not replaced. The (door of a chicken-coop (which is built in the ground) must not be removed nor replaced on the Sabbath." It may be right to prohibit the removing or replacing of the door of a chicken-coop (built in the ground), because removing it would constitute the act of tearing down, and replacing it would constitute building, but as for the doors of a drawer, chest, or cage, what is the opinion of the rabbis? Do they hold that the acts of building and tearing down apply also to utensils? If so, why do they permit the removing of the doors (lids); and if not, why do they

prohibit replacing them? Said Rabha: "The act of building does not apply to utensils, but replacing is prohibited more as a precautionary measure, lest one drive the door in with a stick (and this would constitute the act of hammering)."

"*One may take a hammer,*" etc. Said R. Jehudah: This refers to a hammer intended only for nut-cracking, and such a hammer may be used to crack nuts, but a smith's hammer must not be used for that purpose; [for R. Jehudah holds, that a thing which is intended only for an act prohibited on the Sabbath, must not be used even for a permissible act]. Rabba, however, says, that a smith's hammer may be used to crack nuts [for he holds that a thing which is intended only for a

prohibited act, *may* be used for a permissible act].

It was taught: R. Hyya bar Aba in the name of R. Johanan said: "We have learned, that a hammer which is intended for hammering gold may also be used for cracking nuts." R. Shoman bar Aba said: "We have learned, that the hammer referred to is intended to be used for spices."

The one who teaches that a spice-hammer may be used certainly permits a gold-hammer; but the one permitting a gold-hammer to be used, does not allow a spice-hammer, because a spice-hammer must be kept perfectly clean, and is laid away for non-use during the Sabbath.

"*A spindle and a shuttle to pick fruit,*" etc. The rabbis taught: A date which was not quite ripe, and was put in straw which was intended for use in clay-making, might be taken out, providing it was, not completely covered by, the straw, but enough to take hold of was left uncovered. The same applies to a cake which was taken out of the oven not quite done, and was put in glowing cinders to be cooked; but R. Eliezer ben Tadaï said, that both the date and the cake might be taken out even when completely covered, providing this is done with a prong, and then the straw or the ashes respectively fall off of themselves. Said R. Na'hman: "The Halakha prevails according to R. Eliezer ben Tadaï."

From this we see that R. Na'hman holds, that handling in an unusual manner is not considered handling at all; but did not R. Na'hman say, that if a radish is deposited in earth with its roots downwards and its head upwards and protruding from the earth, it may be taken out; but if deposited head downwards, it must not be taken out (and thus we see that R. Na'hman regards handling in an unusual manner the same as handling

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proper)? The answer is, that R. Na'hman afterward retracted his decision concerning the radish.

"*A sewing-needle to remove a splinter.*" Rabha the son of Rabba sent a request to R. Joseph: "Let the master teach us the law regarding a needle, the eyelet or the point of which had been broken off." R. Joseph answered: "We have learned this in our Mishna: 'A sewing-needle to remove a splinter.' What difference would it make to the splinter whether the needle has an eyelet or not?" Rabha objected: "We have learned, that a needle, the eye or the point of which had been broken off, is not subject to defilement." Said Abayi: "Thou confusest Sabbath with defilement? As for defilement, a vessel must be complete in order to be subject to defilement; but for Sabbath use, anything which can be used is in itself sufficient, and with this needle I can remove a splinter."

R. Na'hman forbids the straightening of the limbs of a child at birth on the Sabbath, and R. Shesheth permits it.

MISHNA: The hollow olive-cane is subject to defilement if it has a knot; if not, it is not subject to defilement. In any event, it may be handled on the Sabbath.

R. Jose 1 saith: "Any utensil may be handled on the Sabbath, with the exception of the large wood-saw and the plough-share."

GEMARA: The rabbis taught: Previously only three utensils were permitted to be handled on the Sabbath, and they were: a knife to chop pressed dates, a skimmer, and a small table-knife. Subsequently more was allowed, and then still more, and then more again, until finally any utensil was allowed with the exception of the wood-saw and the ploughshare.

What is meant by "subsequently more was allowed, and then still more," etc.? Said Rabha: They allowed a thing which was intended for use in a permissible act, whether it was needed for another purpose, or whether the room it occupied was needed; then still more was allowed, namely: to shift a thing out of the sunshine to a shady place; then more *again* was allowed, namely: a thing that was intended for use in a prohibited act (*e.g.*, a smith's hammer) was permitted to be used for another purpose or when its room was needed; but it was not permitted to be moved from the sunshine into the shade, and all this was

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allowed to be done by only one person, but not by two, until finally all utensils might be handled even by two persons.

Abayi raised an objection to this: "We have learned, that a mortar which contained garlic may be handled, but if it did not contain garlic it must not be handled." The answer was this: It is meant, to remove from the sunshine to the shade. R. Hanina said: This Mishna was taught in the times of R. Nehemiah ben Hahalyah, as it is written [Nehemiah xiii. 15]: "In those days I saw in Judah some treading wine-presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, etc." (and because in those times there was great laxity in keeping the Sabbath, strict laws were made as a precaution, and even a mortar was not allowed to be handled unless it contained some eatables). Said R. Elazar: The Mishnas relating to the pieces of wood for the showbreads in Tract Menahoth, the sticks used by the priests for the Passover sacrifice in the Tract Pesachim, the bolts in the Tract Kelim, and the above Mishna relating to the mortar (all of which prohibit the handling of such things on Sabbath) were all taught *before* it was allowed to handle all vessels.

MISHNA: The utensils may also be handled with intent to use them or without such intent. R. Nehemiah saith: "They may be handled only if intended for use."

GEMARA: What is meant by "with intent to use them," etc.? Said Rabha: "'With intent to use them' means to use a thing which was intended for use in a permissible act, whether it was needed for its intended use, or whether the room it occupied was needed; and 'without such intent' means even to shift a thing from the sunshine into the shade, and a thing that was intended for use in a prohibited act was permitted to be used for its intended use or when its room was needed, but it was not permitted to move it from the sunshine into the shade. Now R. Nehemiah comes to say, that even if a thing was intended for a permissible act, it may be used only for its intended use and if the room occupied by it were needed, but it was *not* permitted to shift it from the sunshine into the shade.

R. Sapa, R. Aha b. Huna, and R. Huna bar Hanina were sitting together. The latter asked R. Sapa, according to Rabba, who explains Nehemiah's teaching (that even a permissible thing must not be removed for the purpose of occupying its place): "How can we remove dishes after eating?" Said R. Sapa: "It is equal to a dirty thing (standing on a clean place), which may be removed at any time."

R. Mari bar Rahel had several leather bolsters that lay in the sun (on a Sabbath). He came to Rabha and asked him if he might move them. Rabha told him it was allowed. Said R. Mari again: "I have other bolsters besides these." Answered Rabha: "This makes no difference. Thou mightst need those too if guests should call." Said R. Mari again: "I have sufficient for guests also." Said Rabha to him: "This proves to me, then, that thou art of the opinion of Rabba, who prohibits the moving of things from the sunshine into the shade on Sabbath. Hence everybody else may do this, but thou must not."

Said R. Aba in the name of R. Hyya bar Ashi, quoting Rabh: Whisks may be handled on the Sabbath to sweep the tables, but the brooms made of date-palms (which are only intended for floor-sweeping) must not be used for sweeping the tables. This was also stated by R. Elazar.

MISHNA: Of all utensils which may be handled on the Sabbath, fragments may also be handled, but it must be with a purpose, viz.: the pieces of a kneading-trough to cover the bung-hole of a cask, the pieces of a glass to cover the mouth of a pitcher. R. Jehudah says: "They must be fit for the same use (as the whole utensil), viz.: the parts of a kneading-trough to hold a brew, and the pieces of a glass to hold oil."

GEMARA: Said R. Jehudah in the name of Samuel: "The first Tana of the Mishna and R. Jehudah differ only as to fragments which were broken off on the Sabbath; for the former holds that the fragment is part and parcel of the utensil, and fit for the same use, while R. Jehudah holds, that the fragment is a newly created thing; but if the fragments were broken off before the Sabbath set in, all agree that they may be handled because they were prepared for use while it was yet (week) day."

We have learned, in one Boraitha, that fire maybe made with utensils, but not with fragments; and in another Boraitha we have learned, that as we may make fire with utensils, so we may also use fragments for the same purpose. In a third Boraitha, however, we were taught, that we must not make fire with either utensils or fragments. We must say, then, that the first Boraitha is in accordance with the opinion of R. Jehudah (who holds, to the theory of "Muktza" and Noled (a newly [created](#) thing), the second Boraitha is in accordance with the opinion of R. Simeon (who holds to neither of the two theories), and the third Boraitha is in accordance with R. Nehemiah (who holds that

every utensil must be used for its particular purpose and not for other purposes).

R. Na'hman said: "Bricks left over from a building may be handled, because they can be used as seats; but if the bricks were piled up one on top of the other, they were evidently designated for building, and must not be handled." R. Na'hman said in the name of Samuel: A fragment of a piece of pottery may be handled in private ground, but not in unclaimed ground (because in private ground other vessels can generally be found and the fragment may be used as a lid or cover, but in unclaimed ground there are no other vessels and the fragment cannot be used in that manner); but R. Na'hman himself declares, that the fragment may be handled in unclaimed

ground also (because in unclaimed ground there may also be some things which can be covered), but not in public ground; and Rabha, however, says, it may be handled even in public ground (because having been once regarded as a utensil in private ground it remains such everywhere).

This theory of Rabha's is borne out by his action; for it happened that he was walking on the street Ritka in the city of Mehuzza on a Sabbath, when his shoe became soiled with dirt. His servant came and cleaned it off with a fragment of a piece of pottery. The rabbis who went behind him scolded his servant for this act, whereupon he (Rabha) remarked: "It is not enough that they have not learned (what is permissible and what is not), but they also want to teach others. If this fragment were in private ground, it would have been a useful article because a vessel could be covered with it, and here in public ground it is useful to me."

R. Jehudah in the name of Samuel said: "The bung-head of a broken barrel may be handled on Sabbath." We have also learned this in the following Boraitha: "The bung-head and the pieces of a broken barrel may be handled on Sabbath, but it is not allowed to break off a piece of the fragments and cover a vessel with it or put it under the legs of a bedstead." If the bung-head and pieces, however, were thrown away among the garbage before the Sabbath, they must not be handled at all.

R. Hamdura said in the name of Samuel: "The waste of a mat may be used on the Sabbath." Why so? For what purpose can it be used? Said Rabha: "Bar Hamdura explained this to me as follows: What is a mat used for? To prevent the dust from settling upon an object, and the waste can also be used

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for covering up dirt." R. Zera said in the name of Rabh: "Remnants of silken togas must not be handled on the Sabbath." Said Abayi: "This is said of remnants that measure less than three fingers square and are of no value to either rich or poor."

The rabbis taught: Fragments of an old oven are equal to any other vessels that may be handled on Sabbath. So said R. Meir; but R. Jehudah said they may not be handled. R. Jose testified in the name of R. Eliezer ben. Jacob, that fragments of an oven may be handled on the Sabbath and the covers of an oven may be handled even if their handles are broken off. Said Rabhina: "According to whose opinion do we handle to-day the covers of the ovens used in the city of Mahassia, which have no handles? It must be according to the opinion of R. Eliezer ben Jacob."

MISHNA: One may dip water with a hollow pumpkin to which a stone is fastened, providing the stone will not fall off; otherwise, one must not dip water with it. One may dip water with a jug to which a vine branch is fastened.

"For a window-blind," says R. Eliezer, "a thing may only then be put up, if it be fastened and hang down; otherwise, it must not." The sages say it may be put up in any manner.

GEMARA: We have learned in another Mishna: "If a stone lie at the opening of a barrel, the barrel may be bent over, so that the stone fall down." Said Rabba in the name of R. Ami, quoting R. Johanan: "The case applies only when the stone lying at the opening of the barrel was

left there unintentionally; but if placed there on purpose, the barrel becomes a base for a prohibited thing (and must not be moved)." R. Joseph in the name of R. Assi, quoting R. Johanan, said, on the contrary: "If the stone was left there unintentionally the barrel must be bent over, so that the stone fall down; but if placed there intentionally, it serves as a lid to the barrel, and may be removed." On what points do R. Ami and R. Assi differ? One holds, that an act must be accomplished in order to be an act, while the other holds the intention to be equivalent to the deed, and their respective theories are borne out by their opinions which follow:

For when R. Dimi, and according to others R. Zera, came from Palestine, he related in the name of R. Hanina: It happened that Rabbi once went to a certain place on a Friday, and finding a pile of stones said to his disciples: "Go and have it in your minds that we intend to sit on these tomorrow." Thus

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[paragraph continues] Rabbi did not order them to act, but merely to think. R. Johanan, however, said, that Rabbi ordered his disciples to act. And what, according to R. Johanan's opinion, were the disciples to do? R. Ami said, that Rabbi ordered them to place the stones in position for them to sit on, but R. Assi said, that Rabbi ordered them not only to place the stones in position, but also to clean them (because, in the latter's opinion, changing the position of an object does not constitute an actual deed).

It was taught: R. Jose b. Saul said it was not stones but a pile of building wood. R. Johanan b. Saul, however, said it was not building wood but poles with which the depth of the water is sounded.

*"One may dip water with a hollow pumpkin to which a vine-branch is fastened."* If it is fastened one may, and if not, one may not. Shall we assume that our Mishna is not in accordance with the opinion of R. Simeon ben Gamaliel? as we have learned in a Boraitha: Branches of a tree which were intended for kindling, if subsequently used for sitting purposes, must be tied together, but R. Simeon ben Gamaliel said, they need not be tied together. 1 Said R. Ashi: It may be said, that this Mishna is not at variance with the opinion of R. Simeon ben Gamaliel, but is merely a precautionary measure, for fear that a branch, being brittle, might be broken by the man if not tied together.

*"For a window-blind,"* etc. Rabba bar bar Hana in the name of R. Johanan said: All agree that it is not permitted to put up even a temporary tent 2 to begin with on a biblical festival, and decidedly not on the Sabbath, but as for adding (that is, if part of the blind was already up) a blind to a temporary tent that had already been put up, R. Eliezer said, that it is not permissible on a festival and much less so on the Sabbath, and the sages declare, that it is permitted on the Sabbath and so much the more oil a festival.

*"The sages say it may be up in any manner."* What is meant by "in any manner"? Said R. Aba in the name of R. Kahana: "By that is meant, that it makes no difference whether the blind was fastened or not, providing it was prepared for its purpose since the day before." Said R. Jeremiah to him:

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[paragraph continues] "Why wouldst thou assume that the sages would be more lenient in this matter? Say rather that they meant to state, that it made no difference whether the blind hung down or not, providing it had been previously fastened." R. Aba answered: "Because I hold with the Tana of the following Tosephta: A stick, prepared by the master of a house for the opening and locking of a door, may be used on Sabbath, providing it was fastened and hung to the door; otherwise, it must not be used. R. Simeon ben Gamaliel, however, declared, that as long as it was prepared for that purpose, it was of no consequence whether it was fastened and hung to the door." (Thus it may be seen that R. Aba held with R. Simeon ben Gamaliel.)

R. Jehudah bar Silas in the name of R. Assi, quoting R. Johanan, said: "The Halakha according to R. Simeon ben Gamaliel prevails." Did R. Johanan say this in reality? Have we not learned in a Mishna, that all covers of vessels having handles attached may be handled on Sabbath? Referring to this, R. Jehudah b. Shila in the name of R. Assi, quoting R. Johanan, said, that such would be the case only if the covers could be made use of as independent vessels. (How, then, can R. Johanan hold with R. Simeon ben Gamaliel, who says, that the stick which was not fastened to the door may be used on Sabbath, surely it is not an independent vessel?) Shall we assume, that R. Johanan holds with R. Simeon ben Gamaliel only in the case where the stick could also be used for other purposes and thus could be called an independent vessel? Then how can it be said that R. Johanan holds with R. Simeon ben Gamaliel, for the latter does not require the stick to be an independent vessel, as we have learned above in the matter of the branches (see page [273](#)), where R. Simeon ben Gamaliel declares, that they need not be tied together? R. Johanan is in accordance with him only in the matter of the stick being prepared for its particular purpose without being fastened to the door, but disagrees with him as regards an independent vessel.

R. Itz'hak of Naph'ha [1](#) proclaimed at the door of the Exilarch's house, that the Halakha according to R. Eliezer prevailed. R. Amram raised an objection: "We have learned in the last Mishna of this Tract as follows: 'Thence we learn that it is permitted to put up a window-blind, to measure and to tie on the Sabbath.'" (How, then, could R. Itz'hak say, that the

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[paragraph continues] Halakha according to R. Eliezer prevailed?) Said Abayi to him: Upon what is thy objection concerning R. Itz'hak based? The Mishna just mentioned gives the opinion of the sages only, who are at variance with R. Eliezer in our Mishna, and thou mightst say, that because no contention is mentioned, the Halakha according to the sages prevails; then thou knowest of another Mishna (in Erubin), concerning the hinge of a cupboard door, no name is mentioned, and still the Mishna appears to be in accordance with the opinion of R. Eliezer only (thus R. Itz'hak can accept R. Eliezer's opinion). Saith the Gemara: (Although Abayi justified R. Itz'hak) an *act* of the sages (as is related in the last-mentioned Mishna) is sufficiently decisive to establish the Halakha.

MISHNA: All lids of utensils may be removed (on the Sabbath), provided they have handles. Said R. Jose: What does this apply to? To lids of vessels fastened in the ground, but lids of vessels in general may be removed at all events.

GEMARA: Said R. Jehudah bar Shila in the name of R. Assi, quoting R. Johanan: "The lids of utensils may be handled only if they can be made use of for other purposes as independent

vessels." Saith the Gemara: "All agree, that covers of utensils (fixtures) fixed in the ground must be handled only if they have handles attached, and lids of other utensils not fixed in the ground may be handled even if they have no handles, but the point of the divergent opinions is as regards the covers of ovens, the one side contending, that ovens must be regarded as fixtures in the ground and the other side contending that they are ordinary utensils."

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## Footnotes

[268:1](#) In the Mishna of Yost and De Sola and Raphall, R. Jehudah was credited with the saying, but in our original R. Jose is named, as is proven in Erubhin 35 a.

[273:1](#) Compare page [90](#), in this tract.

[273:2](#) By a temporary tent, says Rashi, is meant principally a sheet put up on four poles to serve as a roof, but screens on the sides are not considered a tent. The putting up of a window-blind in a building, however, is regarded by R. Eliezer as an addition to the building.

[274:1](#) See note to page [96](#), in this tract.

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[Next: Chapter XVIII: Regulations Regarding the Clearing Off of Required Space, the Assistance To Be Given Cattle When Giving Birth To Their Young and To Women About To Be Confined](#)