

Koreya/Tearing

A. *Koreya* (tearing)

- a. This melacha was done in the mishkan to repair the cloth coverings. The fabric was torn in order that it could be re-sewn with a straight, even seam.
- b. Premise: Tearing apart one item into two pieces OR detaching two pieces that were glued or sewn together.
- c. If it was torn to re-sew or in a constructive manner (beneficial to item torn from), it is generally a d'oraisah tearing, while destructive tearing is prohibited rabbinically.
- d. UNINTENTIONAL TEARING: Tearing that occurs inadvertently is not forbidden. For example, one may use a thin tissue to wipe his head or hands, even though it is possible that it may tear. ALSO, if one's clothing got stuck on a thorn, one may gently remove it, even though the fabric may tear as a result.
- e. Tearing food is not a problem of *koreya*.
- f. Tearing aluminum foil, plastic wrap, paper towels, toilet paper are all prohibited under *koreya* (and perhaps *mechateich*).

B. Tearing for Shabbos needs

- a. One is permitted to tear paper or plastic for Shabbos needs IF
 - i. It is done in a destructive manner AND
 - ii. No letter are destroyed as a result
- b. The act must be **clearly destructive, which depends on the kind of package and the result of the tearing.** We will discuss the various issues associated with opening packages, below. Since it is complicated and small details make a difference (including how the item was manufactured), **it is preferable that all containers be opened before Shabbos.**

Issues with Opening Packages on Shabbos

1. *Koreya* (tearing)

- a. Tearing a package made out of cloth, plastic, paper, cardboard, aluminum foil, etc. can be a problem of *koreya*.

2. *Mechateich* (measured cutting)

- a. Cutting an object or material to a measured size is *mechateich* (e.g. ripping paper towels on the ridged lines)

3. *Mocheik* (erasing)

- a. Erasing or destroying a letter, symbol or picture is a transgression of the prohibition of *mocheik*.

4. *Boneh* (building)

- a. This melacha involves forming a structure of almost any kind. Opening a sturdy sealed food container (e.g. cans, bottles, boxes) can transgress this melacha.

5. *Makeh Bipatish* (the final hammer blow)

- a. This melacha entails creating or completing any functional item. For example, making a wire hanger into a hook or detaching pages of a new book that was not fully cut, is this melacha.
- b. Opening a sealed, sturdy container and thus converting it into a functional vessel can be this melach

Practical Applications

A. Wrapping

- a. A thin, flimsy wrapping, which is usually thrown out may be removed from an item that is needed on Shabbos AS LONG AS LETTERS ARE NOT RIPPED.
- b. For example, band-aids, wrapping over wine bottle, foil on container of yogurt, small packages of sugar

- c. A thick wrapping, which is torn and thus destroyed (without ripping letters) may also be opened on Shabbos.
- d. For example, a decorative wrap around a box of candy, or a cover on a new bottle of spices may be removed AS LONG AS LETTERS ARE NOT RIPPED.

B. Bags

- a. All containers should be opened before Shabbos, in order to avoid any halachic compromises. If this was not done, here are lenient rulings upon which one may rely.
- b. **Bags made of flimsy materials** may be opened in any manner, since the bag is considered to just be a protective covering and not a vessel.
- c. One may open a bag of potato chips, candy, saled paper cups, or cutlery
- d. Preferably, the bag should be torn open and destroyed in the process of opening them – but without ripping letters.
- e. **Bags made out of firm materials**, which are reusable are more of a problem to open, since you are essentially fashion a useable container (makeh bipatish).
- f. These bags may **only be opened in a destructive manner**.
- g. For example, bags of sugar, large heavy duty plastic bags with fruit – need to be opened in a way that they are no longer useable, and the contents poured into another container.

C. Cartons and Boxes

- a. Opening **a tissue box** on a perforated line is probably koreya, makeh bipatish and mechateich. One may not open it on Shabbos.
- b. If it is needed, then one may open it by carefully rearing the box open on top and bottom, thereby not creating a usable container. One must be careful not to rip letters or pictures.
- c. One may also not open **a sealed box of cookies, cereal or matza**. Even melting the glue and causing the box to open by itself is prohibited. In time of need, one may open these packages by destroying the box and removing its contents – without ripping letters.

D. Milk and Juice Cartons

- a. Plastic milk bottles which have a cap on top that has a band that is pulled off is a problem of opening on Shabbos. Ripping the band can be koreya and detaching it, creates an effective cap, which is makeh bipatish. One can open these milk bottles by popping off the seal and cap together. One can then reuse a seal from a different milk bottle or put it back on in the same manner.
- b. Orange juice bottles:
 - i. The orange juice bottles with a pull-off plastic tab are a problem to open on Shabbos.
 - ii. The bottles with a plastic wrapper over the cover may be opened on Shabbos (under wrappers above), assuming there is no lettering on the wrappers.

E. Metal Cans

- a. Opening metal cans is not koreya, but can be boneh and makeh bipatish. Many poskim rule that it is forbidden to open any cans on Shabbos. If one must open a can, then it may be done by opening the can on the bottom and top, so as to make it an unuseable vessel from the start.

F. Opening Twist Off Caps

- a. Metal twist off caps may not be opened on Shabbos, since by opening the bottle you are creating an functional cover. One should open this bottle before Shabbos and make sure the cap is dully detached from the ring. (For example, the covers on sparkling grape juice.)
- b. If one forgot to open the bottle, one (a) may puncture the cap before opening (thus ruining the cap and not creating an effective cover), but without tearing letters. (b) Alternately (and not as ideally), one may discard the cap immediately after opening it.

- c. Plastic twist-off caps are less problematic than metal ones, since they are functional before they are attached to the bottle. However, they too should be opened before Shabbos.

G. Labels or Dry Cleaning Tags

- a. Removing labels or dry cleaning tags which are sewn or stapled on to a garment should not be done on Shabbos, since it is Koreya. It is not considered destructive, because with its removal the garment is considered improved. It is not a problem to wear outside on Shabbos and it is not considered carrying.
- b. If the label is connected by a string or plastic thread, it is should preferably be removed before Shabbos. If this was not done, one may remove it on Shabbos (but should not do so publicly, lest people who are unaware of the intricacies of the halacha may deduce wrongful halacha from this.)

Cutting Food with Letters

Cake with letters written on it – should be cut between the letters, but then may be eaten normally

Script letters on Cake – should be cut between the letters, but then may be eaten normally

Design (but not meaningful picture) on a cake – if it is just a geometric design, it is not a problem to cut on Shabbos

Tea biscuits with letters baked into it – is considered part of the food, and is not a problem to break on Shabbos, even by hand

Cookie in the shape of an animal – same as tea biscuits and one may eat it on Shabbos