



Parshas Bamidbar 5762

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Is one permitted to use a needle to remove a splinter?

A needle is a classic example of a *ke'li she'melachto l'issur* (an item used for a prohibited act on Shabbos) and may be used *l'tsorech gufo*, which in this case is to remove a splinter.¹ The *Shulchan Aruch* adds an interesting *halacha* saying, that if the eye of the needle broke, the needle is *muktzeh*, even though with regards to removing a splinter it is irrelevant whether the needle has an eye or not. This is because a broken needle is usually discarded, and as such it is not a *ke'li*.²

The *Mishna Berura* writes that one should be careful not to extract blood unnecessarily. If the splinter is causing pain, and blood will surely be extracted during the process of removing the splinter, the splinter may nevertheless be removed, because in this case *Chazal* did not institute a decree in place of distress.³

A leg of a chair came out. May one sit on the chair?

Initially one might say that there could be nothing wrong with sitting on a chair without a leg. However, *Chazal* were afraid that if one were to sit on a chair whose leg became detached, being that it is

uncomfortable and impractical to maintain a proper balance, one would attempt to forcefully⁴ reinsert the leg back into the chair. They therefore instituted a decree called *shema yitka* – lest it be reinserted forcefully. The chair is duly *muktzeh*, as one is now forbidden to sit on it.

The *simon* we are now learning does not enter into the intricacies of this decree. It only deals with the *muktzeh* aspect, and therefore we will focus our concentration on *muktzeh* as well.

If the leg of the chair is broken and requires mending before being reinserted into the chair, the chair is not *muktzeh*.⁵ This is because we are not afraid that a person would go so far on Shabbos and mend the leg or fashion a new one.

The same rule applies if the leg of the chair is not present. Since the “leg” cannot be reinserted the chair is not *muktzeh*.

If the wheel of a baby carriage came off, does the carriage become muktzeh?

The above rule applies itself to many items, and one must be aware of it. If a wheel of a baby carriage comes off its axle, the carriage in certain cases will become *muktzeh*. If the screw for tightening the wheel is present, or if the wheel is usually rejoined with force, it would be forbidden to restore the wheel to

¹ *Simon* 308:11

² *M"B* 308:48.

³ *M"B* 328:88 and *Sha'ar Ha'tsiun* 63. See also *SS"K* 35:17.

⁴ As mentioned further on, joining parts of a *ke'li* with force involves either the *melacha* of *Boneh* or *Makeh B'patish*.

⁵ *M"B* 308:69.

its original place, and the carriage would be *muktzeh*. If the screw got lost and no other is available, one would be permitted to place the wheel on its axle, on condition that it slips on and is not placed with force. This is because placing or restoring it with force involves the *melacha* of either *Boneh* or *Makeh B'patish*.

The stick of the broomstick came out, is one permitted to put it back?

The same rule applies to a broomstick. When the stick detaches from the brush, one is sorely tempted to reinsert it back into the brush. Since the stick is screwed in place and screwing is equivalent to joining,⁶ it is forbidden to insert it and therefore the broom is *muktzeh*.⁷ If the broomstick frequently detaches itself, there may be what to rely to reinsert it, and preferably a rav should be consulted. This *halacha* may apply to the glass piece or handle of eyeglasses and to other items that are composed of a few pieces. A *rav* should be consulted at such an eventuality.

Vort on the Parsha

The *possuk* says that Moshe Rabeinu was commanded to “count (raise) the heads of B’nei Yisroel”, and *Rashi* explains that *Hashem* counted the B’nei Yisroel on numerous occasions. He counted us when we came out of Egypt, He counted us after the death of the sinners of the Golden Calf and He counted us after the erecting of the *Mishkan*.

The famed Rav Moshe Shneider *Ztzc”l* commented that the counting of B’nei

Yisroel by *Hashem* is analogous to the *gemora* which says that a person often counts his money due to one’s attachment and fondness of it.

HaRav Moshe Sternbuch Shlita adds that it is therefore **each and everyone’s** duty to do the utmost he can in the service of *Hashem*, in light of the fact that *Hashem* is interested in his personal welfare and being, and not looked upon simply as one of the crowd.

Food For Thought

If a rock or a piece of glass pose as a hazard to the public, what may be done to remove it?

I would like to crack open a nut with a rock on Shabbos, may I?

What about the using of a rock as a doorstopper?

When walking in the forest, may I plop down onto any stone?

Answers coming next week.

Iggeres HaGra - (part 21)

That's why I wrote you to hit our children if they don't obey you. "Train a lad in the way he ought to go" (Mishlei 22:6). This is an important principle of education.

I also wish to appeal to my son-in-law to adhere to all the above. Read to the children as I have stated and learn for the sake of Heaven. Become well-versed in it for *Hashem's* sake. Don't pay attention to those who say that it is unnecessary for the child, G-d forbid. To the contrary, "Train a lad, etc." It is easier to remove the skin of a nut before it hardens into a shell.

⁶ *Sha'ar Ha'tsiun* 313:32.

⁷ *Binyan Shabbos* chapter 6:1 (page 55).

Dedicated in honor of the bris of Lipa Gelfand, Lakewood, N.J.

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Note: The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive p'sak.