



Parshas Bereishis 5764

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May one walk or sit on grass on Shabbos?

Everybody sits or walks on grass on Shabbos and it is permitted. The question though is why is it permitted? Are we not afraid that one might uproot the grass while walking or sitting on it?

The *gemora* in *Eiruv* 100b actually deals with this issue and concludes that one may walk on grass with ¹ or without shoes; on wet ² grass and dry; tall grass and short. The reason it is permitted is because the *halacha* is in accordance with R' Shimon who holds that a *melacha* that is performed unintentionally and in passing on Shabbos is permitted (דבר שאין מתכוין). The *poskim* add that this is on condition that it is not clear-cut that the *melacha* will be done (לא פסיק רישא).

In simple language this means that since it is not clear-cut that sitting or walking on the grass one will uproot it, it is permitted. The *Mishna Berura* adds that if after walking through grass one finds grass between one's toes, they are *muktze* and should not be removed with one's hands.

Is it permitted to run on grass on Shabbos?

¹ There is more room to prohibit walking barefoot on grass because the grass gets caught between the toes. The *gemora* concludes though that it is permitted.

² Wet grass is soft and weak and easily uprooted or broken (*Me'ir*). *Rashi* explains it differently.

Following the above, the *Bi'ur Halacha* ³ says that one may not **run** in tall grass because it is a *p'sik reisha* (definite) that one will uproot the grass. He adds that one should even take care not to walk too quickly in tall grass in such a manner that it is very probable that one will uproot the grass.

Accordingly we can apply this *halacha* to other instances and when in given circumstances we know that one's action will surely uproot the grass, one would be prohibited to proceed.

May one smell a myrtle branch (hadas) that is attached to the ground on Shabbos?

One may smell a rose or a *hadas* on Shabbos even though the stalk or shoot is attached or planted in the ground. ⁴ A *b'rocho* must be made when taking such plants to smell, see your siddur for the correct *b'rocho*.

The same applies to *hadasim* or roses placed in a vase on the table.

What about smelling a red, rosy apple attached to the tree?

Chazal differentiated between the smelling of edible fruit and fragrant plants. Plainly there ought not to be a difference between the two. However, *Chazal* were concerned that were one permitted to smell an edible fruit on Shabbos one might easily pick the fruit to

³ ביאור הלכה סי' של"ו ס"ג ד"ה מותר לילך.

⁴ As for handling the flower or plant, see the *M"B* 336:48 and the *SS"K* 26:22.

eat it and transgress an *issur d'oraisso* of “picking” on Shabbos. Although there is also room for concern that one might pick a fragrant plant when smelling it on Shabbos, since one can benefit from the plant when it is attached and smell it thus without picking it, *Chazal* were unafraid that one would pick it on Shabbos.

One may smell a detached apple or etrog on Shabbos; only one should make the *b'rocho* “הנוטן ריח טוב בפירות”.

What about smelling the hadasim on Sukkos that are used for the mitzvah of netilas lulav?

We've missed the boat this year, but the *halacha* is that on *Sukkos* one may **not** smell the *hadasim* that are being used with the *lulav*.⁵ The reason is because *hadasim* are usually designated as fragrant and when used for the *mitzvah* of *lulav* one designates it for the *mitzvah* and disassociates it from its regular use.⁶

The Etrog, on the other hand, is not usually designated as fragrant, being that it is an edible fruit. As such one disassociates it from its regular use, i.e. eating and designates it for the *mitzvah*, but it is not ‘removed’ from smelling because it is not intended for smelling. However, the *Shulchan Aruch* says that one should not smell an Etrog on *Sukkos* because there is a dispute as to the correct *b'rocho* made when smelling it on *Sukkos*.⁷

Is one permitted to make the b'rocho over the blossoming of the trees on Shabbos?

⁵ *Simon* 653.

⁶ *M"B simon* 653:1.

⁷ See the *M"B* 653:3 who brings one opinion who holds that one must only refrain from smelling the etrog while fulfilling the *mitzvah* and another opinion who holds that one should refrain from smelling the etrog for the entire *Sukkos*.

It is customary around the month of Nissan to praise Hashem with the recital of the *b'rocho* of tree blossoming. The *Kaf haChaim*⁸ writes that one should refrain from the recital of this *b'rocho* on Shabbos lest one handles a tree or lest one picks from the tree. The question is that we learnt that when one merely wishes to smell a branch etc. *Chazal* were not afraid that one will pick the branch. The same logic should apply here as well. Here too one does not smell a fruit and it should be permitted to recite this *b'rocho*. For a valid *p'sak* one should refer to a rav.

Vort on the Parsha

Man was made in the form of Hashem. Obviously this has a metaphorical meaning, what is it?

Hagaon Rav Aharon Kotler quoted his rebbe the Saba of Slabodka saying that a person often alters and beautifies his exterior but does not alter his inner self. Rav Aharon concludes that Man has the capability for change and inner creation just as Hashem is a Creator. It is this aspect that Man was given for the purpose of self-perfection.

Food For Thought

May one make a picnic lunch in one's garden on Shabbos?

Is it permitted to transfer a vase of flowers from the table to the sideboard?

What about moving a pot-plant from one location to another?

If the flowers fell from the vase on Shabbos may one return them?

Answers coming next week.

⁸ *Kaf haChaim Simon* 226:4.

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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.