



Parshas Ki Savo 5763

September 12, '03
Volume II Issue 46

What about the use of a sauna after Shabbos which was heated during Shabbos?

This question was more pertinent in earlier times, when heating a sauna or bathhouse meant adding wood or coals to a fire and stoking it. We will nevertheless discuss it because this *halacha* has many ramifications to our current lives.

For the sauna to be hot straight after Shabbos, the bathhouse attendant would have to heat the sauna or baths on Shabbos. Since *Chazal* prohibited deriving benefit from actions performed by gentiles on Shabbos when performed for Jews, it is imperative to determine whether indeed it was done for Jews.

The *Shulchan Aruch*¹ teaches us that when the majority of the bathers are gentiles, we regard the heating as being done solely for them and Jews may bathe or sweat in the sauna straight after Shabbos. If the majority are Jews, or Jews and gentiles equally, we regard the heating as being done for the Jews and they may not bathe straight after Shabbos. In such a case they must wait the time of *bichdei she'ya'asu*, i.e. the time it takes to do the prohibited *melacha*. In this case, if for example it takes 3 hours to heat the sauna or bathhouse, a Jew must wait 3 hours before entering.

Where is this applicable today?

This applies to any action a gentile performs on Shabbos and is used by Jews after Shabbos. If it takes 2 hours to open and heat

up a swimming pool that is used mainly by Jews (separate swimming), and the caretaker makes the preparations on Shabbos, the bathers must wait 2 hours after Shabbos before swimming.

Is one permitted to rub oil on chapped hands?

Applying oil to one's body in Shabbos is not a problem unless it is done for one of two reasons. If one applies oil in order to massage one's body it is a problem and should be avoided.² If applied as medication, one encounters the problem of dealing with and administering medicine on Shabbos. As previously mentioned, *Chazal* prohibited medication on Shabbos unless one is ill, as described in the previous shiur. Chapped hands or lips are not severe enough to be termed illnesses and therefore one may not apply oil etc. as treatment.³ If however, it is customary in that vicinity for healthy people to apply oil on their hands on a regular basis, one may apply oil to chapped hands as well, because then it is not seen as medication.⁴

May one smear oil on one's body for pleasure?

We mentioned that massaging is a problem but applying oil for its own benefit and not for medicinal reasons is not a problem. Vaseline and any other thick oily substance

² See *simon* 327:2 and *M"B* 5-7 how one may rub oil in the permitted manner.

³ *Rama* in *simon* 327:1 and *M"B* 4.

⁴ *Mechaber* *simon* 327:1.

¹ *Simon* 326:13.

is prohibited on account of ממרח – smoothing. We are only referring to a liquid.

May one apply oil to leather shoes on Shabbos?

The *Mishna Berura* ⁵ explains that there are two problems applying oil to shoes. The basic problem is that oiling leather is one of the methods for treating leather. Tanning is an *Av Melacha* and oiling leather is part of the process. Oiling new shoes might involve an *issur d'oraisso*, but even old shoes must not be oiled. ⁶

The second problem is coloring. Polishing black shoes black is obviously an *issur* of coloring, ⁷ but even oiling shoes when the purpose is to enhance and shine the shoe is also a severe problem. ⁸

How can oil, which is neutral, be called coloring?

The idea behind coloring is to give an item a certain appearance. An oiled surface enhances the color beneath it and gives it a shine. The same applies to smearing colorless liquid on lips or painting fingernails with a neutral color on Shabbos. All these enhancers are intended to highlight the natural color beneath and are all prohibited on account of coloring. ⁹

Vort on the Parsha

The *posuke* says (27:2-3) “And it shall be on the day when you shall pass over the Yarden to the land which Hashem gives you, that you shall set up great stones and cover them

with plaster, and you shall write upon them all the words of this Torah, **when you will pass over** etc”. The *Malbim* explains that בעברך means when you are passing, in present tense.

The *gemora* (*Sotah* 35) says that when the Yarden spilt to allow Bnei Yisroel to pass through, a giant pillar of water built up on one side and all the while the Yarden continued flowing thus building the pillar of water even higher.

It was in this state of awe that Bnei Yisroel were commanded to inscribe the Torah on the stones, in the Yarden, with the water continuously raging and building up. *Hashem* did not instruct them to first cross the waters and on firm, safe ground inscribe the Torah. This was to teach His beloved children that before they enter into Eretz Yisroel they must be prepared to keep the Torah in all circumstances, in calm waters and in stormy waters, in times of peace and in times of war.

May *Hashem* grant us a year of peace and serenity and may Bnei Yisroel serve *Hashem* without anymore sorrow. ¹⁰

Food For Thought

May one climb up a tree on Shabbos?

May one climb down a tree on Shabbos?

Is there a problem placing something on a tree or removing something from a tree on Shabbos?

What about leaning on a tree?

Answers coming next week.

⁵ *Simon* 327:12.

⁶ *M”B simon* 327:12.

⁷ See the *SS”K* 15 footnote 127 in the name of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach.

⁸ *Ibid*.

⁹ Shoes - *SS”K* 15:37 and footnote 128. Lips – *SS”K* 14:58. Fingernails – *SS”K* 14:57.

¹⁰ ספר טללי אורות.

One may receive and distribute these weekly shiurim by calling or writing: Office 99 Rechov Bayit Vegan, Yerushalayim, Phone Numbers: U.S. and Canada 732-370-3344 Israel 972-3-616-6340

South Africa 2711-728-4275 UK 020-8731-6666 Australia 61-296835626 Switzerland 0114143 333 0288

• e-mail: shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com, or www.shemayisrael.com,

weekly sponsorships are available as well.

If you would like to send a question to Rav Ostroff, you can write to him at shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com.

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.