



Parshas Vayigash 5764

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May one use a safety pin on Shabbos?

You might ask yourself, what can be wrong with using a safety pin on Shabbos. After all, I'm not sewing or doing any other *melacha*. To answer, we will present the basic concepts of sewing. The *Rambam* (10:9) writes the following: One who sews two stitches is liable to bring a *korban chatas*, provided that one subsequently tied the thread to prevent the stitch from undoing itself. One who sews more than two stitches is liable to bring a *korban* even without tying the thread because the stitches are permanent.

What does the above have to do with inserting pins?

When inserting a pin to pin up a hem, one is in effect inserting it at least twice, if not three times, through two pieces of cloth and consequently it should at least be rabbinically prohibited¹ or *ossur mid'oraisso*. The *Mishna Berura*² cites the *Korban Netanel*³ who says that since two stitches without tying is at least an *issur d'raban*, on what basis do people permit themselves to use pins to pin their clothes on Shabbos, and on what halachic basis do the women of Prague pin the *scarf* to their clothing? We see that he understood that a pin shares the same status

as thread-sewing and therefore it should be prohibited.

The *Chazon Ish*⁴ first points out that the *Korban Netanel* never prohibited it, as he himself attested that the custom was to permit it; rather he was questioning an accepted custom. The *Chazon Ish* continues that one cannot compare inserting pins to sewing because a pin is by nature a temporary stitch and was never prohibited by *Chazal*.

But are two stitches not temporary also (when not subsequently tied) and nevertheless it is ossur mid'raban

The *Chazon Ish* answers this saying that although two stitches are temporary, nevertheless it is part of the normal manner of sewing and therefore even two regular stitches are *ossur mid'raban*, but a pin is not a part of the regular mode of sewing and since it is by nature a temporary bond it is permitted.

Does a safety pin share the same status as a regular pin?

A safety pin is either used as a temporary stitch until a proper stitch is sewed, or it is used to pin a badge to a blazer or to secure a bandage or cloth diaper.⁵ In all these

¹ The *issur d'raban* is based on the *M"B* 340:27.

² Ibid.

³ 7th *perek* of *Shabbos* (50).

⁴ The letter written by the *Chazon Ish* can be found at the back of the *sefer Chazon Ish* under the heading "לסימן ש"מ", on page 510.

⁵ Once upon a time...

instances the safety pin is merely a temporary bond and therefore it is not prohibited.

Rav Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל writes ⁶ that one who wishes to be stringent should apply the stringency in a case where the safety pin or pin could be left permanently in the clothing (pinning a hem or a tear in one's clothing), but when pinning something in a temporary way such as where it has to be freed, such as the safety pin in the diaper, there is no room for stringency at all.

Other *poskim* ⁷ grant the *Korban Netanel* more authority and say that one should only be lenient when fixing **temporarily** with a safety pin (or pin) but when fixing on a more permanent basis one should not insert the pin in each piece of cloth more than once. ⁸

May one staple papers together or remove the staples that are fastening two papers together?

Even if we say that a safety pin is not the regular sewing mode, we cannot say this with regards to paper, as it is normal to bind papers together by stapling. ⁹ Therefore one may not staple or remove staples. Rav Shlomo Zalman writes that one may not staple pages together even for less than the entire Shabbos because it is an עובדא דחול to use a stapler.

May one open an envelope that is stapled shut?

Rav Shlomo Zalman says it is *muter* to remove the staple in this case because it is

only stapled temporarily – until opened by the addressee. ¹⁰

Vort on the Parsha

The *Sha'agas Aryeh* was appointed as the rav of Metz at the ripe old age of 70, and soon after his arrival he overheard some people saying that the new rav has arrived to live in the local cemetery. During the first *d'roshe* in shul on Shabbos he asked, why did Pharaoh enquire as to Ya'akov's age and what was Ya'akov telling him when he replied that his days were short and bitter?

The *Sha'agas Aryeh* explained that ever since Ya'akov's arrival in Egypt, the famine had ceased and Pharaoh was nervous upon seeing such an old Ya'akov that the blessing will not last very long. Ya'akov assured him that he was still young, as Yitzchak died at the age of 180 and therefore he had a long way to go.

The *Sha'agas Aryeh* concluded his vort saying that he too was in the same position and they should not fear, he will remain a rav for 20 years, which indeed happened.

Food For Thought

May one inflate a rubber duck on Shabbos?

What about inflating balloons and air beds?

May one tear a piece of glad-wrap from the roll on Shabbos?

What about tearing toilet paper when there is no option?

Answers coming next week.

⁶ אגרות משה או"ח ח"ב סי' פ"ד.

⁷ Rav Vozner in *Shevet Halevi* vol. IV *simon* 35 and others.

⁸ It is customary to use a safety pin, at least for temporary binding, and for a final ruling one must ask one's rav.

⁹ *SS"K* 28:5 and footnote 17.

¹⁰ Rav Shlomo Zalman in the *SS"K* 9:9 and footnotes 34-35.

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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.