

THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

HALACHA SERIES ON HILCHOS SHABBOS

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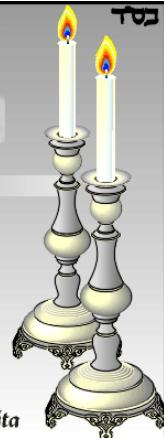
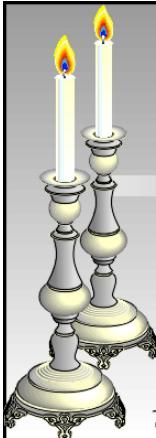


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RABBI DOVID
OSTROFF shlita

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*If one forgot to turn out the refrigerator light
may one ask a child to open the refrigerator
door?*

Refrigerator doors are set up in such a way that when the door is opened the light comes on. Being that it is something that always takes place, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *z"l*¹ prefers to refer to it as a direct action and not as a *p'sik reisha*.

Accordingly one may not direct one's child to open the refrigerator if the light will be turned on, because one is directing a child to perform an *issur*.

This is true of a neighbor's child and all the more so of one's own child.

What then is the solution?

The preferred solution is to have a gentile open the refrigerator door.² If we regard the turning on of the light as a *p'sik reisha*, a gentile may perform a *p'sik reisha* on Shabbos. This is based on a few examples, one of them being the following case:

The *Rama*³ says that we may not instruct a gentile to heat food on Shabbos, but the solution is to have the gentile place the food on the heater when the heater is turned off, and by turning on the heater to heat the house (which a gentile is permitted to do in cold climates) the food will be heated indirectly – through a *p'sik reisha*. Even if we refer to turning on the light as a direct action (Rav Shlomo Zalman above)

there is nevertheless room to permit a gentile open the door.⁴

What if there is no gentile available?

One should have a child pull out the refrigerator plug from the socket when the refrigerator motor has stopped.⁵ Since the child is only handling *muktze*, a *d'rabanan*, and it is for the sake of a *mitzvah* of the Shabbos meal, there is room to permit such an action, when it is done for the essential foods for the *Shabbos* meal such as fish and meat, which without one would not have *oneg Shabbos*.

This is based on the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 343:8 which permits using a child to violate an *issur d'rabanan* for the sake of a *mitzvah* provided that it is not a common occurrence. Needless to say that the plug may not be returned to the socket.⁶

If I see that my child is about to do an issur must I prevent him from doing so?

We learned in the previous shiur that an adult is biblically prohibited from handing a child an *issur*. In contrast, one is not biblically obliged to prevent a child from performing or from partaking of an *issur* when doing so for his own benefit.

⁴ *SS"K* ibid. This is because there are ways to open the door without turning on the light, such as inserting a knife between the door and the refrigerator and pressing on the light switch while opening the door, thus disabling the light switch.

⁵ Rav Shlomo Zalman in the *SS"K* 10:14 and footnote 38.

⁶ *SS"K* 10:14

¹ See the *SS"K* 31 footnote 1.

² *SS"K* Ibid

³ *Simon* 253:5 and *M"B* 99.

However, *Chazal* oblige parents⁷ to **educate** their children in the ways of the Torah. If a child is of an age that he understands not to do something when told, the parents must educate him in that vein.

Would it not depend on the age of the child?

Absolutely. If a one year old is turning a light on and off on Shabbos there is no obligation to prevent him from doing so, because the child does not understand what the parent wants from him. (It is possible that when other children see that the child is not prevented from doing ‘*chilul Shabbos*’ it will have an adverse effect on their own Shabbos observance and there is room to find alternative entertainment for the child, but the child *per se* need not be prevented). A child who begins to understand the word “Shabbos” and associates it with not doing certain actions should be trained in the observance of Shabbos.

What is the halacha with regards to other people’s children?

The *Mechaber*⁸ holds that only a child’s father (and perhaps the mother) need educate his child but one is not obliged to educate another person’s child. The *Rama* cites an opinion who holds that everyone is obliged to educate everybody’s children. The *Mishna Berura*⁹ sets the middle path with the *Chayei Adam* who says that one must prevent other people’s children from violating an *issur d’oraissō* but not an *issur d’rabanan*. Although it is advisable to other children as well that it is *Shabbos* today.

Accordingly, if one sees children in the street pulling leaves off a tree¹⁰ one should tell them that it is *osur* on Shabbos. If one sees children carrying sticks and stones to play with, since *muktze* is only an *issur d’rabanan* one is not obliged to ‘educate’ them.

Vort on the Parsha

Rashi (11:2) says that Moshe pleaded with the *B’nei Yisroel* that they should ‘borrow’ silver and gold from the Egyptians. The question is obvious, why did Moshe have to plead with them, would they not take it willingly?

Rav Yehoshua of Horodna answers saying that *B’nei Yisroel* knew that the Egyptians owed them an absolute fortune in work-pay and therefore any monies taken are rightfully theirs. However, it is not becoming of *B’nei Yisroel* to take money in a deceitful fashion – to borrow without intending to return. Therefore Moshe needed to plead with them to take what was owed to them in order to fulfill *Hashem*’s promise to Avraham that they would leave Egypt with an abundance of property.

Food For Thought

Does it make a difference whether the child is about to do an issur for my benefit or for his?

Does the obligation to educate only apply to Hilchos Shabbos?

Am I obliged to make sure that my child hears havdalah? What if havdalah is late at night?

Are children permitted to eat before Kiddush?
Answers coming next week.

⁷ The *M”B* 343:2 writes that there are *Achronim* who hold that education – *chinuch* is also the responsibility of the mother.

⁸ The onset of *simon* 343.

⁹ *Simon* 343:7.

¹⁰ Which is probably a *d’oraissō* because they enjoy pulling off the leaves and are doing it for that purpose.

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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.