



THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

HALACHA SERIES ON HILCHOS SHABBOS

Published by



A Project of
The Shema Yisrael Torah Network

based on the shiurim given by

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developed from the Chabura of the
Shulchan Aruch Project

These halachos were shown by Rabbi Ostroff to HaGaon HaRau Moshe Sternbuch, shlita



Parshas Noach 5764

October 31, '03
Volume III Issue 2

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

Several problems exist when making a picnic and one must be aware of them.

Firstly, one may not wash one's hands over the grass because watering grass on Shabbos is an *issur d'oraisso* of *Zore'ah*. One may argue and say "I am not watering the grass, I am merely washing my hands and *by the way* the grass is being watered". It is a semi-valid argument, and we will explain.

We have often mentioned the concept of *p'sik reisha*, which refers to a *melacha* being done by-the-way. The *halacha* is that a *p'sik reisha d'nicha lei*, i.e. one is content and happy with the outcome of the *melacha* done by-the-way, is also a *melacha d'oraisso* and transgressing it on Shabbos is akin to doing a direct *melacha*.

Accordingly therefore, washing one's hands over one's own grass, although it is only a *p'sik reisha* and not a direct *melacha*, since one is pleased that one's own grass is watered it is an *issur d'oraisso*.

Would it make a difference if it was not in my own lawn?

It surely would make a difference because you are indifferent as to the outcome of the washing. This kind of action is classified as *p'sik reisha d'lo nicha lei* or *lo ichpas lei*, which means a *p'sik reisha* that one does **not want** the outcome or one is **indifferent** to the outcome. The *halacha* in this case is a *machlokes* as to whether it is prohibited or

not. The *Mishna Berura*¹ says that many *poskim* are of the opinion that it is prohibited.

This case would only hold true in a stranger's garden or in a forest, but in your close friend's garden, since you have his interests at heart, watering his garden would please you as well and it would be called *nicha lei*.²

It is unclear whether washing hands in a **public park** is called *nicha lei*, where on the one hand you are not responsible for watering the grass but on the other hand you are extremely pleased when the grass in your local park grows nicely. (It is anyway prohibited on account of *lo nicha lei*).

There are the obvious problems of carrying when there is no *eiruv* when making a picnic out of one's own garden.

Are there any other problems making a picnic?

The *Rama* says³ that it is nearly impossible not to spill liquid when eating and therefore it is correct to be stringent and not have a picnic in one's garden on Shabbos. If one takes care though to wash hands and drink indoors it is no problem.⁴

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

¹ M"B Simon 336:27.

² M"B ibid.

³ Simon 336:3.

⁴ The *Rama* says that it is correct... when water is drunk as part of the meal.

It is accepted that flowers in a vase are not *muktzeh* on Shabbos and Yom Tov and thus the vase they are in is not *muktzeh* either.⁵ Accordingly one may transfer the vase from one's table and put it on the sideboard.

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

One may not return flowers to water on Shabbos even if they fell out on Shabbos.⁶ On the other hand, one may return branches without flowers to water on Shabbos.⁷ The difference is that flowers bloom in water and returning them causes the flowers to bloom, which is similar to planting. It is unclear what the *halacha* is when the flowers are already blooming and are open, וצ"ע, *SS"K* 26 footnote 91.

May one add water to the flower vase on Shabbos?

Chazal did not permit us to add water to a vase on Shabbos and were even more stringent with regards to changing the water. Both these actions are prohibited on Shabbos on account of exerting oneself unnecessarily on Shabbos. Therefore, if the vase is nearly empty or it has a dirty color one may not add water or change it.⁸ One **may** add water to a vase on Yom Tov.⁹

A guest arrives on Shabbos (there is an eiruv) or on Yom Tov with a bunch of flowers, may you put them in water?

As mentioned, flowers may never be placed in water on Shabbos or Yom Tov due to their blooming. If however the guests arrive with fragrant branches and the like which do not have flowers, the *halacha* is that one may **not** put them in water on Shabbos and Yom

Tov. One may instruct a gentile to put them in a vase that has water prepared before Shabbos.¹⁰

	Shabbos	Yom Tov
Return flowers	ossur	ossur
Return branches	permitted	permitted
Put flowers or branches	ossur	ossur
Add water	ossur	permitted
Change water	ossur	ossur

Vort on the Parsha

The *posuk* says ויחל נח איש האדמה ויטע כרם, which literally means that Noach **first** planted a vineyard, but *Rashi* says that it means mundane as opposed to holiness. R' Itzaleh of Volozin explained this with a parable. A father said to his son before going out into the world, I bless you that the first thing you turn to will have tremendous success. If the son is ירא שמים, he has fear of heaven, he will turn to something spiritual such as learning Torah. If he is not he will turn to mundane matters.

Hashem had just blessed Noach, as it says ויברך אלקים את נח, and he 'wasted' it on a mundane matter, the vineyard.

⁵ *SS"K* 26:25.

⁶ *Rama* and *M"B simon* 336:54.

⁷ *M"B* *ibid*.

⁸ *M"B* *ibid*. it is based on the *Shulchan Aruch* in *simon* 654, *Hilchos lulav*.

⁹ *SS"K* 26:26, based on *simon* 654.

¹⁰ This is because some *poskim* hold that even a Jew may put branches in a vase that has water in it before Shabbos (see *Sha'ar Ha'tsiun* 48). Although we do not rely on that opinion for ourselves but to instruct a gentile we may rely on it.

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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.