



Parshas Tzav/Pesach 5764

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May one permit a gentile to vacuum the carpet on Shabbos?

So up to this point it seems that vacuuming should be permitted by a gentile?

In the previous shiur we learnt that a gentile may find a convenient way to carry out a request provided that the request can be carried out in a permitted manner. Based on that, we learnt that a gentile may use a dishwasher to wash dishes, as the dishes could be washed in a permitted manner. Accordingly it would then seem that a gentile may use a vacuum cleaner to clean the carpets because similarly, it can be done in a permitted manner.

Before we answer the question we must briefly explain the issue of cleaning carpets on Shabbos.

The *Rama*¹ writes that one may not shake a garment on Shabbos in order to remove the dust thereon. The *Mishna Berura*² explains that the *halacha* is referring to dust absorbed into the garment and not to dust lying on top of the garment. The *Mechaber*,³ on the other hand, says that one may not shake dew from a garment and does not prohibit the shaking of dust.

The *Mishna Berura* says⁴ that one may permit a gentile to dust one's clothing (relying on the *Mechaber*) especially when dusty clothes will cause embarrassment.

There is another issue involved called **אורשא מילתא** – making noise.

The *Rama*⁵ deals with the following issue: a person would fill the container of a water mill with wheat and the mill would then grind the wheat automatically. The *Rama* says that one may not fill the container close to Shabbos because the grinding may be heard outside and people might think that one was grinding on Shabbos.

The *Rama* continues that it is permitted though to wind a grandfather clock before Shabbos even though the ticking (and the chimes) will be heard on Shabbos as it is known that one winds a clock before Shabbos and the noise emitting from the clock is due to the initial winding.

The *Mishna Berura*⁶ adds that it is prohibited to wind the clock on Shabbos and one may not ask a gentile to wind it either.

Accordingly, we would say that the gentile may not vacuum the carpet as it can be heard outside and people will suspect one of violating the Shabbos.

Does this prohibition apply to Sephardim as well?

The basis for this question is that the *Mechaber*⁷ permits operating the mill before

¹ *Simon* 302:1.

² *M"B simon* 302:5.

³ *Simon* 302:1.

⁴ *M"B simon* 302:6.

⁵ *Rama simon* 252:5.

⁶ *M"B simon* 252:50.

⁷ *Simon* 252:5.

Shabbos and is not concerned with אוושה מילתה.⁸ Accordingly it would seem that the Sephardim who follow the *Mechaber* may permit a gentile to use a vacuum cleaner when the carpet could be cleaned *b'heter*. The problem is however that a vacuum cleans far better than one can with one's hands and therefore it may be forbidden for a gentile to use a vacuum. One should ask one's *rav* for a *p'sak* in this matter.

May I hand money to a gentile before Shabbos with instructions to purchase something for me without specifying that I want it bought on Shabbos?

The *Shulchan Aruch* writes⁹ that one may hand money to a gentile with instructions to make a purchase, provided that the request does not specify making the purchase on Shabbos. The *Mishna Berura*¹⁰ cites the *poskim* saying that this only applies when the gentile is being paid for working, in which case it is considered as if it is being done for the gentile's own benefit – to receive his pay. If the gentile is not paid or rewarded for working, when making the purchase on Shabbos, we view it as if it is work being done for the Jew - and is forbidden. Another stipulation is that it is possible to make this purchase on a day other than Shabbos.¹¹ If, for example, the purchase can only be made on Shabbos, or the only time you ask the gentile to make the purchase is Shabbos, then even without requesting that it be bought on Shabbos, it is prohibited.

⁸ The *machlokes* between the *Mechaber* and the *Rama* is based on a *machlokes* in the *gemora Shabbos* 18a between Raba and Rav Yosef. (The *Vilna Ga'on* writes that the *Be'er HaGolah* who annotates the *Mechaber* as following Raba is incorrect, because the *Mechaber* is like Rav Yosef and the *Rama* is like Raba.

⁹ *Simon* 307:4.

¹⁰ *M"B Simon* 307:14.

¹¹ *M"B Simon* 307:15.

This would be similar to telling him to make the purchase on Shabbos.

Vort for the Chag

In the *Hagaddah* it is stated that *Hashem* calculated the time of the redemption and he redeemed us earlier than planned.

The story goes that R' Yitzchak Blazer זצ"ל, the *Rav* of Petersburg held a meeting with the wealthy men of the town. One of them asked the *Rav*, "Do you believe that *Moshiach* can come today?" The *Rav* replied, "of course!" The man continued saying that *Chazal* said that *Moshiach* will not come as long as people have money and since we here are all wealthy people how can he come today?

The *Rav* countered that even if a prophet would say that the *Moshiach* will not come today or tomorrow, he is not to be believed. But to reply to your question... the answer is that when *Moshe Rabeinu* said to the *B'nei Yisroel* that *Hashem* is going to redeem you from Egypt, they also had a *kushiya*. *Hashem* had said that they would be in Egypt for 400 years. The answer to them was ה' הישב את הקץ, *Hashem* made the right calculations and redeemed them. In your case too, *Hashem* will make and figure out the right calculations and bring *Moshiach*.

Food For Thought

May I set up a self operated coin machine before Shabbos knowing that gentiles will probably use it on Shabbos?

What if there is a possibility that Jews will use the vending machine on Shabbos?

What about leaving a fax machine on or an answer phone to accept orders on Shabbos?

Is one permitted to set up one's computer to automatically bid for an item on Shabbos?

Answers coming next week.

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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*.