

# THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

## HALACHA SERIES ON HILCHOS SHABBOS

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*How close to Shabbos may one travel to another destination?*  
Chazal did not place a specific limit on traveling on Fridays, but nevertheless one must always leave ample time, when traveling on a Friday, for situations that might develop and be a cause for a Shabbos violation.<sup>1</sup> (Initially Chazal did limit traveling on Friday in order to leave sufficient time to prepare food for Shabbos, but nowadays that people prepare more food than necessary this limitation does not apply. Nevertheless one should not arrive as an unannounced guest too close to Shabbos because it might cause people to violate the Shabbos).

*What is the reason one should sharpen knives for the Shabbos?*

The Rama<sup>2</sup> teaches us that one should sharpen knives for Shabbos, as it is a way to honor the Shabbos by preparing oneself for the meal. The poskim<sup>3</sup> add that this is based on the *Sifri* and the reason for concern is *Sholom Bayis*. The correlation between a sharp knife and *sholom bayis* is that if the host will want to cut the beef and the carving knife is blunt, the first thing he will do is blame his wife, which will cause the *sholom bayis* to go downhill. It is for this reason that Chazal wanted one to sharpen knives in order to avoid this point of conflict.

We find the same issue for the necessity of having light in one's home on Shabbos, because in a dark house one can trip over items lying around, which will cause unnecessary friction.

*What work may be done on erev Shabbos?*  
On the whole, one should not work on *erev* Shabbos and *erev* Yom Tov after the time of *mincha ketana*, which is two and a half proportional hours before sunset, in order to prepare for the Shabbos.<sup>4</sup> One who works after this time will not see a *b'racha* from this work,<sup>5</sup> and even if one earns money during that period, it will be deducted from somewhere else.<sup>6</sup>

Since the reason to abstain from work is in order to honor the Shabbos, the *halacha* makes a distinction between work that is done for Shabbos and work that is not done for Shabbos and between temporary work and permanent work. There are other types of work as well, as we will see *be''H*.

**Work done for Shabbos:** One may work on Fridays even after *mincha ketana* when it is necessary for the Shabbos. Therefore, because it is done for Shabbos, one may take and give a **haircut** and be paid for it even after *mincha ketana*.<sup>7</sup> One may **mend** and

<sup>4</sup> *SS"K* 42:32.

<sup>5</sup> *Simon* 251:1.

<sup>6</sup> *M"B* 251:2.

<sup>7</sup> The *Bi'ur Halacha* ד"ה ומסתפרין cites the *Vilna Ga'on* who holds that one should avoid taking a haircut after *mincha ketana*.

<sup>1</sup> *M"B simon* 249:3, *SS"K* 42:24.

<sup>2</sup> *Simon* 250:1.

<sup>3</sup> *M"B simon* 250:5.

**sew** clothes that are needed for Shabbos. This even includes professional tailoring, but when done for another person one may not ask for payment.

*Why is a barber permitted to ask for payment and a tailor or seamstress not?*

Taking a haircut before Shabbos is noticeable that it is being done for Shabbos and therefore one may even ask for payment, whereas mending or sewing is not necessarily for Shabbos and therefore when one's intention is to wear the garment on Shabbos one may mend or sew it even after *mincha ketana*, but one may not ask for payment.<sup>8</sup>

We now have a new definition – anything done for Shabbos may be done after *mincha ketana*, however, when it is not obvious that it is done for Shabbos, one may not ask for payment for that particular work.

**Work not done for Shabbos:** temporary and brief labor may be done even after *mincha ketana*,<sup>9</sup> because one is not normally bogged down with such work and hence it will not impede one's Shabbos preparations. Therefore one may sew a button, write a letter, water the garden superficially (as opposed to heavy garden work), etc. One may even ask for payment for such work.<sup>10</sup>

Arduous and heavy labor may not be done after *mincha ketana*, even without payment. This will include repairing furniture and various appliances (when not done for Shabbos), construction etc.<sup>11</sup>

*What happens if I do not work, as above, and as a result I will incur a loss?*

<sup>8</sup> *M" B* 251:7.

<sup>9</sup> *Simon* 251:1 in the *Rama*.

<sup>10</sup> *M" B* 251:4.

<sup>11</sup> *Simon* 351:1 and *SS"K* 42:39.

The *halacha* is that basically one may complete that work even after *mincha ketana*, if a loss will be incurred – a *davar ha'aved*,<sup>12</sup> but nevertheless one should try and avoid having to work close to Shabbos.<sup>13</sup>

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### Vort on the Parsha

We find that *Hashem* hardened Pharaoh's heart five times in order to punish him with the last five plagues and the question asked by many is, that it does not seem to be fair to punish him if he is incapable of making his own decisions. The *Ramban* answers this question (*Sh'mos* 7:3) saying that Pharaoh himself hardened his own heart during the first five plagues and the only reason he would have sent *B'nei Yisroel* from *Mitzrayim* is because he could not physically and mentally withstand the strain and torments of the plagues and not because he realized that *Hashem* is All powerful and he should be obeying His commands. *Hashem* therefore gave him the strength to withstand the plagues until he realized that *Hashem* is the King of the world.

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### Food For Thought

*Is retail-selling included in this prohibition of working after mincha ketana?*

*Are there any differences between erev Shabbos and erev Pesach?*

*May I start a wash in the washing machine or dryer before Shabbos?*

*What about setting a timer on the irrigation system in my garden?*

Answers coming be" H next week.

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This issue is dedicated for the hatslacha of Chaim ben Liba and a shiduch hagun for Michael ben Ilana.

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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.