

THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

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Is it a problem to tear between letters? For example tearing between letters of an ice cream wrapper?

No, tearing between letters is not called erasing¹ even though a word is “erased”. The reason is because placing a piece of paper with a letter written on it next to a similar piece of paper is not called writing even though one has “joined” two letters, so too the separation of such letters would not be called erasing.²

May one play with word games on Shabbos, such as Scrabble?

The object of Scrabble is to form words from letters. Forming words is not a *melacha* at all and therefore as far as forming words is concerned, it is not a problem. (In the previous shiurim we learnt that one may slice a cake between the letters and it is not considered erasing – as only cutting an actual letter is erasing - here too one may form a word and it is not called writing).

However, the *Chayei Adam*³ writes that one may not play a game where it is normal to write down, as a *g'zeira* lest one will write on Shabbos, and part of the game of scrabble is to write down the score. Accordingly it seems that one may not play scrabble on Shabbos and indeed the *Sh'miras Shabbos Kehilchasa*⁴ cites the *Chayei Adam* and does not quote opinions that permit it.⁵

¹ *SS"K* 9 footnote 48 citing Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach.

² See the *תקונין ומילואים* *ibid.*

³ ח' אדם כלל ל"ח י"א

⁴ *SS"K* 17:31

⁵ Many do play scrabble on Shabbos and ע"צ what they would do with this *Chayei Adam*. It is possible that it is

Is one permitted to etch a line in a book with one's fingernail in order to remember where one left off?

On the one hand a single line is meaningless⁶ and does not stand for anything. On the other hand, one etches it onto the page for a reason. The *Mechaber*⁷ says that one may etch a line with one's fingernail onto the page in order to remember where there is a mistake and correct it after Shabbos. However the *Mishna Berura* explains that the *Shulchan Aruch* is referring to inscribing onto parchment, which has a hard texture and the parchment will reform leaving no mark, which is not the case with paper which is soft and where the mark will remain. Therefore it is forbidden to score or make a mark on paper. Accordingly, one may not etch or score a mark in a book in order to remember where one is at, or to mark a mistake.

May one fold over a page corner that makes a crease in the page in order to remember one's place?

It is permitted to fold a page even though it creases the page because one has no need for the crease itself nor does one fold the page with the purpose of creasing the page.

a *chidush* of the *Chayei Adam* that was not accepted by other *poskim*. One should ask a rav for guidance.

⁶ *M"B simon* 340:24.

⁷ *Simon* 340:5

Stitching and Sewing on Shabbos

If I see that the button on my sleeve is loose, am I permitted to pull the thread without knotting it afterwards?

The *Shulchan Aruch*⁸ says that one may not pull the thread that binds two pieces of cloth together to draw them closer on account of *תוֹפֵר* – sewing.

The *Mishna Berura*⁹ adds the following:

If two stitches are loose and one ties the thread after pulling it, one is *chayav* (liable) to bring a *korban chatas*, i.e. one has violated an *issur d'oraissos*. If one does not tie it, one has violated an *issur d'rabanan*.

If three stitches are loose and one pulls the thread, one has violated an *issur d'oraissos* even without tying the thread.

Usually a button is sewed many times over and by pulling the thread one is tightening quite a few stitches. According to the above it would be considered violating an *issur d'oraissos* even without tying the thread after pulling it, and all the more so if one were to loop the thread around the stitches to keep them in place.

May I wear the shirt or jacket when the button is thus loose?

The problem with wearing such clothing in that state is the problem of carrying without an *eiruv*. A button or hook is usually regarded as part of the clothing and has no intrinsic value of its own, but when a button thread has become loose and one refrains from buttoning it lest it falls off, it is possible that the button is not considered part of the clothing and it is better to refrain from wearing such clothing in a *reshus harabim* where there is no *eiruv*.¹⁰

One may wear clothing in a *reshus harabim* which have threads hanging from buttons that have totally fallen off provided that one is not disturbed by their presence and one does not

intend to remove the threads.¹¹ It is forbidden to remove a loose button or loose threads from a garment on account of the *issur* of tearing,¹² being that the threads are still part of the garment.

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?

We will see next week *be”H*.

Orchos Chaim LaRosh

אל חוציא שם שםים לבטלה – Do not utter Hashem's name in vain. Rabeinu Yonah in *Sha'arei teshuvah* (3:61) writes that many people are afflicted because they mention Hashem's name in vain. Although Hashem is merciful and He loves His children, He is also a king and a ruler and as such must be feared. Uttering His name carelessly shows disrespect and therefore, before we make a *b'racha* on food, we must know how to make the *b'racha* – is it the correct one, is the place clean, are my hands clean. All this in deference to the great king.

⁸ *Simon* 340:6

⁹ *Simon* 340:27.

¹⁰ See the *M”B* 301:150 and *SS”K* 18:40 and footnote 161.

¹¹ See the *SS”K* ibid.

¹² See the *SS”K* 15:68 and footnote 219.

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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*.