



Parshas Chukas in Eretz Yisroel 5766

Parshas Korach in Chutz La'aretz

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May one insert the wick into the float, used in oil candles, on Yom Tov?

The issue involved is making a *k'li* – *makeh b'patish*. One's initial reaction is that it cannot be *makeh b'patish* as one is merely inserting the wick into the float. It is inserted without force or technical know-how, so what could be the problem?

Indeed we find that one may not insert feathers or down into a pillowslip for the first time because one is making a *k'li*.¹ Even though it is quite simple to insert down into a slip and this does not require force or craftsmanship, many *Rishonim*² say that it is an *issur d'oraisso* (a biblical violation).

So is it permitted or not?

In the previous shiur we learned that on Yom Tov it is permitted to insert a thread into a needle,³ even though one can argue that the two now become a *k'li* and it should be *ossur*. The explanation is that the needle is merely holding and pulling the thread does not make it a complete *k'li*. So too we can say that the float holds the wick and prevents it from sinking into the oil,⁴ therefore it does not become a *k'li*.

To me it looks the perfect k'li, why should it be permitted?

For many years we were accustomed to threading a wick through a pipe-like holder on

Yom Tov and it was never considered making a *k'li*. The holder holds the wick in the center of the oil container and prevents it from sinking. The floating wick is the same idea only more sophisticated and its insertion is not 'making a *k'li*'.⁵ Other rabbonim are stringent and say that it does involve *makeh b'patish*, and as usual one must ask one's rav.

What's the issue with playing Lego on Shabbos?

Fastening items to each other in a sturdy manner involves *makeh b'patish* because a complete item is manufactured in the process. Even if one did not complete the item on Shabbos, the *issur* of making a *k'li* will still have been violated because it is part of the process. For example, assembling a baby's crib on Shabbos with screws, nuts and bolts is an *issur d'oraisso* of making a *k'li*. It is likewise *ossur* to assemble half the crib on Shabbos. Assembling Lego would appear to be the same.

However, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach says they are not the same.

Lego can be compared to a baby's bottle which may be opened and closed as needed.

What can be wrong with closing a baby's bottle?

A baby's bottle without the teat is useless and one may close it on Shabbos because it is not a permanent closure. In order to reuse it, it must be opened again. Lego pieces are also assembled temporarily and in order to continue playing one takes the pieces apart. So even though models

¹ *Simon* 340:8.

² *M"B simon* 340:33 and *Sha'ar Hatsiun* 68.

³ Based on *M"A simon* 509.

⁴ Rav Ezriel Auerbach cited in *Binyan Shabbos* pg 161.

⁵ Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach in the *tikunim u'milu'im* chapter 11 footnote 133.

and designs are created by assembling pieces together, they are never seen as a completed, finished product because the intention is to take them apart for further use.⁶ On the other hand, permanent Lego, such as pieces exhibited in displays, would be *ossur* to assemble on Shabbos because of their permanence.

May one remove clothes tags?

Here too the issue is *makeh b'patish*, because one might view the removal of clothes tags as finishing the product. Indeed the *Shulchan Aruch* writes⁷ that one may not remove fringes⁸ left over from the weaving process on account of *makeh b'patish*- completing the garment. One difference is that the price tag is not affixed to the garment as part of the manufacturing process; on the contrary, it is added after the completion of the garment. Another major difference is that the tailor or manufacturer would not sell a garment with the fringes attached to the garment, because it would be selling an unfinished product. The price tag is affixed to a finished product and hence its removal does not complete the product.⁹ Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach explains that one need not be concerned with tearing either because the tag was never intended to remain attached to the garment.¹⁰

May one straighten a bent fork?

It happens often at a *simcha* that one happens to be landed with a fork with crooked prongs. Straightening the prongs can involve an *issur* of *makeh b'patish* because one is completing – mending the product. The *Magen Avraham* writes

¹¹ that one may not straighten a bent needle on Shabbos even when it is only slightly bent. Accordingly one may not straighten a bent knife or a spectacle frame handle because it repairs the *k'li*.¹²

Vort on the Parsha

"And they captured a captive", *Rashi* explains that the captive was a single maidservant, for which the entire *B'nei Yisroel* went to war. *Am Yisrael* does not give up lives, and if it means saving a fellow Jew the entire army will go to war to save that soul. *Hashem Ya'azor* our present captives and bring them home safe and sound.

Food For Thought

May I inflate a rubber duck on Shabbos?

What about winding up a toy on Shabbos?

May one open letters on Shabbos?

May one ask a gentile to open a letter?

Answers coming be"H next week.

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⁶ See *Binyan Shabbos* pg 47.

⁷ *Simon* 302:2.

⁸ Balls of fabric hanging from the finished garment.

⁹ See Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach in the *tikunim u'milu'im* chapter 35 footnote 63. *Binyan Shabbos* pg 123-4.

¹⁰ *Ibid*. For further understanding see the *Binyan Shabbos* *ibid*.

¹¹ *Simon* 340:11.

¹² *Binyan Shabbos* pg 167.

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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.