



THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

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Parshas Ki Seitzei 5766

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Hilchos Yom Tov (cont.)

May one extinguish fire on Yom Tov?

Fire may not be extinguished on Yom Tov.¹ The *Shulchan Aruch* writes that even if, *Hashem yishmor*, one's home is on fire, one may not extinguish the fire on Yom Tov. One might argue that if one's home burns down one will not have where to eat Yom Tov meals, which should be reason enough; we will see that indeed it is a valid argument. It is noteworthy that *poskim* write² that nowadays a fire such as one burning a home or apartment must be extinguished due to gas cylinders and other hazards that pose a serious threat to people's lives.

On a smaller note, I wish to extinguish a candle to be able to sleep. Is it permitted?

No it is not, because it is not for *ochel nefesh* (relating to food). Extinguishing is not really an *ochel nefesh melacha* (a *melacha* needed for cooking or baking) because after cooking and removing food from the fire, one can let the fire or flames continue to burn. The only reason to extinguish fire after cooking or baking is to conserve energy or save money. These are not valid reasons for Yom Tov.

Does it make a difference if my food is burning?

One might argue that part of cooking is lowering the flame, which if not performed, food would burn. That is true but it does not have to be so.

The alternative mentioned in halacha is to ignite a separate fire, a smaller one, and place the pot of food thereon.³

In a situation when one has a single gas range and the only way to prevent food from burning is to lower the flame, one may do so on account of *ochel nefesh*.⁴

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ztz"l adds that one may not lower the flame to prevent food from overcooking, being that most people would eat it overcooked. If however the food would acquire an unpleasant taste or smell, one may reduce the fire.⁵

May one reduce the heat of an electric oven?

It will depend on the type of electric oven in question. Because one closes a circuit when doing so, digital buttons and knobs may not be used on Yom Tov. All *poskim* accept this position and according to the *Chazon Ish* this is on account of *boneh* – construction.

Even thermostat dials and knobs that are purely mechanical should not be used **on any account** without asking a competent rav. Many times one might directly turn off the oven, or one might not be aware that the dial on one's oven is electrical and not mechanical.

In addition, in some ovens, lowering the temperature directly turns off a heating element, which again involves the *issur* of *soter* – breaking a circuit.

May one cause water to overflow and extinguish a fire?

³ Rama ibid and M"B 514:6.

⁴ See SS"K 13:10.

⁵ SS"K 13:10 and footnote 52.

¹ Simon 514:1.

² See M"B *simon* 514:12.

One of the known methods to extinguish a gas flame on Yom Tov is to boil a pot full of water, which would overflow and cause the flames to go out. Besides being dangerous – gas continues to flow from the range and must be turned off immediately, the halachic validity is questionable, for the following reasons:

This *beter* is known as *g'rama* – indirect action, which 'causes' the flames to extinguish. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach writes that the *beter* of *g'rama* is only used when it 'happens' - not to be used as a regular course of action. In other words, when a fire *chas v'shalom* breaks out, the *halacha* sanctions the use of *g'rama* to extinguish it, but is not intended to be used when the fire was lit beneficially and purposefully.⁶ Another reason for the prohibition is because the water is not cooked for drinking or bathing, the permitted uses on Yom Tov, but to extinguish a fire, which is not a permitted reason.⁷

What do I do with the match after lighting candles?

The match may not be extinguished, therefore the match should be placed on the tray and it extinguishes itself.⁸

Some have a *lichter* to light Shabbos and Yom Tov candles, a silver candleholder with a thin candle inside. One may not extinguish this candle either, even though this may cause the candle wax to solidify and ruin the *lichter*.

May one remove oil from the oil holder?

Not while the wick is burning. The *Rishonim* say that removing oil from a burning candle immediately causes the flame to diminish to a small extent, which is *kibui* – extinguishing.

Is there any way to cause a candle to extinguish sooner?

The *Rama* says that one may light extra wicks in the oil holder, which will quickly consume the oil.⁹ However, the *Mishna Berura* writes¹⁰ that it is a *machlokes* and must be avoided, unless one needs the extra light, in which case it is permitted.

Bottom line is that extinguishing is almost always forbidden. In extenuating circumstances such as loss of property etc. a *rav* must be asked.

Vort on the Parsha

The *posuke* says by giving him a double portion of all that **he has**, but in Hebrew the word he has is written **יָהִי**, which literally means he will have. Simple *p'shat* means that he will have at the time of his demise, but Rav Sternbuch *shlita* adds another dimension.

If one wishes to benefit from the fruits of one's labor in the future – in the world to come, one must acquire assets that will bear these fruits. This is done through educating one's offspring that money and property must be used for charity. In this manner, the assets one bequeaths to one's heirs will continue to bear fruits in the future – **אֵת אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה לוֹ**.

Food for Thought

May one insert the wick into the float on Yom Tov?

May one remove the burned wick from the oil to replace with a new one?

Is it muter to 'flick' the black soot from the wick while burning?

Answers coming be"H next week.

Rav Ostroff would like to thank all who showed interest for his brother who B"H is home safe and sound.

⁶ *SS*:K 13:13 and footnote 58.

⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸ See *SS*"K 13:8 and footnote 38.

⁹ *Simon* 514:2.

¹⁰ *Simon* 514:18.

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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.