



Parshas Beshalach 5767

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Hilchos Chol Hamoed

May one sharpen knives on Chol Hamoed?

Up until now we have been dealing with *ochel nefesh* – preparing food such as baking grinding etc. Now we will *be"H* move on to *machshirei ochel nefesh* – the stage prior to *ochel nefesh*.

What is machshirei ochel nefesh?

Cutting or chopping food is *ochel nefesh*; sharpening a knife is *machshirei ochel nefesh*. One may sharpen knives on *Chol Hamoed*,¹ repair a broken refrigerator, repair an oven or stove and repair a food processor. All these items are food related and hence one may perform whatever tasks necessary to operate them.

Even if one is required to call a professional Jewish technician one may do so² and pay for the services rendered. The Jewish technician is not required to work free of charge on account of *Chol Hamoed*³ because *machshirei ochel nefesh* are being repaired.

Must I borrow a food processor from a neighbor and not repair mine?

One need not borrow a *k'li* from a neighbor.⁴ Since one is repairing a *k'li* that is to be used for *ochel nefesh*, one may do so even though its repair involves craftsmanship and one may be able to borrow from a neighbor.

If the food processor broke down before Chol Hamoed, may it be repaired on Chol Hamoed?

If one did not have time to repair it before *Chol Hamoed* it may be repaired on *Chol Hamoed*, but if one was able to repair it before *Chol Hamoed* and decided that there will be more time to deal with it on *Chol Hamoed*, it is called *mechavein melachto* (designating *melacha* for *Chol Hamoed*) and forbidden.⁵

The *halacha* is not so clear as to the correct course of action⁶ if one did not purposely leave it for *Chol Hamoed* but rather out of laziness did not get around to repairing it. In such a case it may however be repaired in a non-professional manner.⁷

May one repair the faucets in the kitchen?

They are no different to any other *machshirei ochel nefesh* and sometimes they are even *ochel nefesh*. What if one has water in the bathroom that can be used to wash dishes (in the bathtub or basin) and provide water for soup and drinking? Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *ztz"l* indeed holds that if one does not mind using bathroom water for one's needs, the kitchen taps may not be repaired.⁸

He adds however, that one who avoids drinking water from the bathroom (or is dismayed by the thought) may repair the kitchen sinks. I think we all agree that nowadays one will not conceive using water from the bathroom for

¹ Simon 540:8.

² M"B *simon* 540:26.

³ SS"K 66:16, based on *Bi'ur Halacha simon* 542:1 ד"ה ואפילו.

⁴ *Sha'ar Hatsiun simon* 540:24.

⁵ M"B *simon* 540:27.

⁶ See *Sha'ar Hatsiun* 540:23.

⁷ *Sha'ar Hatsiun* *ibid* and SS"K 66:17 even when designated for *Chol Hamoed*.

⁸ SS"K 66 footnote 65.

drinking and cooking and washing dishes in the bathtub is highly inconvenient,⁹ to say the least, in which case one may repair the kitchen faucets. A leaky faucet may be repaired unconditionally because of the loss of water involved.¹⁰

May I have a gentile repair broken kitchen items even when there was time before Chol Hamoed?

We do not find that a gentile has preference over a Jew in this respect and if a Jew may not repair it one may not hand it in to a gentile,¹¹ but nevertheless a rav should be asked.

May one repair the dining room table?

The dining room table is a step away from *machshirin* because it is not associated with preparing food. A stepladder used to retrieve food from a high cupboard is associated with food but not involved directly with its preparation.

The *Shulchan Aruch* says that on *Chol Hamoed* one may make a net from reeds to catch fish, because making it is a *ma'ase bedyot* (non-professional), but not from cord, which is a *ma'ase uman* (professional). The difference is in the making of the net not the end result. The *Beis Yosef* says¹² that an amateur can make a reed net as opposed to a cord net.

Consequently, the items mentioned above such as the kitchen table, the kitchen counter, a stepladder etc. may be repaired in a non-professional manner in accordance with the regular *halachos* of *Chol Hamoed*.¹³ In certain cases, not repairing these items will cause irretrievable loss, which is a *davar ha'aved* and may be repaired on *Chol Hamoed*.

To summarize:

⁹ Rav Shlomo Zalman says that it is hard to permit a *melacha* on *Chol Hamoed* just because of a slight inconvenience like using water from the bathroom.

¹⁰ *SS"K* 66 footnote 64.

¹¹ There is a slight difference with respect to paying for the work, see the *SS"K* 66:16 in the parenthesis.

¹² *Simon* 541:1.

¹³ *SS"K* 66:19 and footnote 87.

One may repair, even professionally

- a refrigerator
- food processor
- sharpen knives
- a kitchen faucet¹⁴

One may repair non-professionally (when quite necessary for *chol hamoed*)

- a dining room and kitchen table
- the kitchen counter
- the dishwasher would appear to fall into this category
- a kitchen stepladder

Vort on the Parsha

Chazal tell us that Moshe Rabeinu threw bitter wood into the bitter waters and they became sweet. What was the purpose of this miracle? The *K'sav Sofer* writes that because they had traveled for three days without water, even though the water tasted bitter to them it was possible for *B'nei Yisroel* to be persuaded that the water was not bitter. It would also have been relatively easy to add sweetener to the water. By throwing in bitter wood instead of a sweetener, Moshe Rabeinu demonstrated the obvious miracle.

Once again he was demonstrating *Hashem's* love for His children.

Food For Thought

May one tear toilet paper on Chol Hamoed?

Any limits on the type of soap one may use?

What about applying lipstick and other makeup?

Answers coming be"H 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.

¹⁴ With the clauses mentioned above.