

THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

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The laws of making an Ohel on Shabbos

If a baby is lying in a crib outside in the sun and the sun is disturbing him am I permitted to cover the crib with a blanket?

Covering a crib with a blanket or shade involves the prohibition of tent erecting, which is a part of the *melacha* of *Boneh* – Construction. Even if one were to erect the shade temporarily it would involve a rabbinical prohibition.

The same would apply to covering a pram or stroller in order to block out the sun.

What is the correct method for covering a crib?

There are quite a few ways with which to correctly shield a crib etc.

1. Was covered a *tefach*¹ before Shabbos.²

The *halacha* says that if an area was covered at least a *tefach* before Shabbos one may complete the covering on Shabbos. Therefore the first suggestion is to place a sheet/blanket/canopy on the crib before Shabbos in a way that it covers a *tefach* and on Shabbos continue and cover according to one's need. The same applies to a baby carriage or stroller.

2. Two items, which are within 3 *tefachim* of each other and the gap between the two cover an area of at

least a *tefach*, constitute a tent and permit covering the remainder of the area.³

The *Mehaber* presents this *halacha* in the form of beams covering a boat deck where for this reason one is permitted to cover the entire deck. This option is more presentable in the case of a crib than a carriage, where one may position two beams or poles above the crib before Shabbos in the required manner mentioned, and cover the entire crib on Shabbos.

This case applies itself to a porch covered with a pergola where there is less than three *tefachim* between each beam. Often these beams may already be a *tefach* wide which would sanction covering the porch even if the beams were more than three *tefachim* apart from each other.

3. A canopy was attached to the crib or carriage before Shabbos.

The *Rama* in *Hilchos Succah*⁴ says that one is permitted to open and shut hinged flaps that are used for covering the succah when raining. The *Chazon Ish*⁵ learned from here that this would likewise apply to a canopy connected to a baby carriage. Since the canopy is attached to the baby carriage before Shabbos, it has the same status of being open a *tefach* before Shabbos and one is permitted to fully open the canopy on Shabbos. The same would apply to a

¹ There is a *machlokes* as to the measurement of a *tefach*: Rav Chaim Na'eh – 8cm (3.14in) and the *Chazon Ish* – 9.6cm (3.77in).

² *Siman* 315:2.

³ *Siman* 315:2.

⁴ *Siman* 626:3.

⁵ *Siman* 52:6.

canopy covering a porch or balcony and accordingly one is permitted to extend such an awning on Shabbos.

There are *poskim*⁶ however who do not agree to this analogy and in order to permit the extending of a carriage's canopy on Shabbos they require the canopy open a *tefach* before Shabbos. As usual one should therefore ask one's *rav* as to how to conduct oneself on Shabbos. Rav Sternbuch *Shlita* said that the custom is to be lenient.

I want to prepare a tarpaulin to cover my succah to prevent rain from entering, how is it done?

One is permitted to cover an already existing "tent" even though the new covering will protect against things the first covering did not. For example, a sunshade, as its name suggests, protects against the sun but does little to protect against rain. Nevertheless, since the particular area is already covered by a "tent" one may cover the sunshade with a tarpaulin protection against the rain.⁷

Therefore one may spread a tarpaulin over the *schach* of the succah even though it will now prevent rain from entering the succah, which the *schach* did not prevent.

However, precaution must be taken that the tarpaulin lies within a *tefach* of the *schach* and not above that, because if a *tefach* is formed between the tarpaulin and the *schach* it constitutes a new "tent" and is forbidden.

I heard that when setting up a ping-pong table on Shabbos one must reverse the order, i.e. first hold the board in the air and then position the legs, is this true?

No, it is false and the following will explain why. The *gemora* in *Beitza* 32b teaches us that certain *keilim* when erected on Shabbos must be erected

⁶ See the *Iggros Moshe Orach Chaim* vol. IV page 194. *Ohr LeTzion*.

⁷ *SS"K* 24:10. Obviously the cover spread above the boat's beams form a superior sunshade than the beams do and one is permitted to do so.

in a backhanded manner, i.e. different to the way it is normally set up. This is because when erecting these particular *keilim* it appears as if one is making a tent – first the legs and then the roof or cover – and therefore a variation from the norm is required.

However, this only applies to *keilim* whose function is similar to a tent's. Just as a tent's inside is utilized for living in, usage etc, so to *keilim* whose 'inside' or 'underside' is used require a deviation when setting up.

A table, *Tosefos*⁸ tell us, is not an item whose underside is used and therefore it would not require deviation from the norm and may be set up in the regular manner.

Therefore when setting up a ping pong table one may first position the legs and then place the board on top of the legs.

Vort for the Z'man

One of the prerequisites for Torah is a *lev tov*. We usually translate that as good-hearted, but that would then read – *tov lev*, rather the correct *p'shat* seems to be one with a good heart. A person who seeks to find good in others, he seeks to do good to others. One who has changed his inner feelings to be on the lookout where he can better other people's lives. R' Yonah in *Sha'arei Teshuva* says that one of the basics of *bein odom lachaveiro* is *liskod b'toras chaveiro*, which means to be a *masmid* (*sh'kida*) with regards to doing good for others.

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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*.