



Parshas Mikeitz/Chanukah 5764

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**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*<sup>1</sup> 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*<sup>2</sup> cites the *Chayei Adam* and does not quote opinions who oppose it.<sup>3</sup>

**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 meaningless<sup>4</sup> and does not stand for anything. On the other hand, one etches it onto the page for a reason. The *Mechaber*<sup>5</sup> 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 which 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.

**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*<sup>6</sup> says that one may not pull the thread that binds two pieces of cloth together in order to draw them closer, on account of *תופר* – sewing.

The *Mishna Berura*<sup>7</sup> adds that the following:

If two stitches are loose and one ties the thread after pulling it, one is *chayan* (liable) to bring a *korban chatas*, i.e. one has

<sup>1</sup> חיי אדם כלל ל"ה י"א

<sup>2</sup> SS"K 17:31

<sup>3</sup> Many do play scrabble on Shabbos and צ"ע what they would do with this *Chayei Adam*. It is possible that it is a *chidush* of the *Chayei Adam* that was not accepted by other *poskim*. One should ask a rav for guidance.

<sup>4</sup> M"B *simon* 340:24.

<sup>5</sup> *Simon* 340:5

<sup>6</sup> *Simon* 340:6

<sup>7</sup> *Simon* 340:27.

violated an *issur d'oraisso*. 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'oraisso* even without tying the thread. Usually a button is sewn 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'oraisso* even without tying the thread after pulling it, and all the more so if one were to loop the thread around the stitches in order 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 this 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 as part of the clothing and it is better to refrain from wearing such clothing in a *reshus harabim* where there is no eiruv.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup> It is forbidden to remove a loose button or loose threads from a garment on account of the *issur* of tearing,<sup>10</sup> being that the threads are still part of the garment.

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### **Vort on the Parsha**

The Greeks had decreed cruel and destructive decrees against the Jews in the time of the *Chashmonaim*. Amongst others,

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<sup>8</sup> See the *M"B* 301:150 and *SS"K* 18:40 and footnote 161.

<sup>9</sup> See the *SS"K* *ibid*.

<sup>10</sup> See the *SS"K* 15:68 and footnote 219.

they were prohibited from performing the *B'ris Milah* upon punishment of death and many young mothers would perform the *b'ris* and together with the newly circumcised baby they would jump from the walls of Jerusalem crying that they would never forsake the *Mitzvos*.

The *Chashmonaim*, with Matityahu at their head, decided to practically, against all odds, sacrifice their lives and fight the incredibly mighty army of the Greeks. It was at this point of *mesirus nefesh* that *Hashem* performed incredible miracles.

Rav Chaim Friedlander זצ"ל explains that nature runs its course along with our deeds and behavior, but when our own nature turns supernatural, so *Hashem* overturns nature and performs miracles. Each person has a certain point of self preservation and one rarely crosses that point. The *Chashmonaim* crossed that point when they realized that Yiddishkeit was dangerously challenged and without *mesirus nefesh* nothing will remain.

At that point *Hashem* performed miracles and fought the war for the Jews, as it says ה' ילחם לכם ואתם תחרישון.

We should all merit the final and complete redemption במהרה בימינו אמן.

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### **Food For Thought**

*What is the halacha with regards to wearing brooches on Shabbos?*

*May one use a safety pin on Shabbos?*

*May one inflate a rubber duck on Shabbos?*

*What about inflating balloons and air beds?*

Answers coming 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.