



Parshas Mattos 5771

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I once saw a gentile, in a certain hotel, take boiling water that was in a pot on the gas and pour it into a hot water urn. Is this permitted l'chatchila, and if not, may the water be used?

I do not think that it should be permitted because the gentile is in fact "returning" food or liquid to an uncovered fire and is prohibited because it looks like cooking, as the hot water urn is not called *garuf v'katum*, and anything a Jew may not do, a gentile is also prohibited from doing.

I think though that the water may be consumed because the water was fully cooked, and when a gentile does *chazora* (returning food or liquid to the fire) against the *halacha*, if it was fully cooked the Jew may benefit from it.¹ Many hotels with *mehadrin* supervisions have the urns padlocked in order to avoid this scenario.

Is there a limit as to what one may speak about on Shabbos?

We will deal with this question on two levels - the first pertains to one's spiritual conduct and the second is a halachic perspective.

In *שעיה* 58:13 we find the following *possuke*:

יג אם-תשיב משבת רגלך, עשות חפצך ביום קדשי;
וקראת לשבת ענג, לקדוש ה' מכבד, וכבדתו מעשות
דרכיך, ממצוא חפצך ודבר דבר.

This entire *possuke* is utilized to teach how one is to conduct oneself on Shabbos. We learn the issue of *oneg Shabbos* – enjoying the Shabbos, honoring the Shabbos and more.

We also learn that one's speech on Shabbos must not be the same as weekday speech. One must not only refrain from violating the Shabbos by not performing the *melachos* and

the many rabbinical prohibitions, but one must transform oneself and be a different person on Shabbos. Thus one's dress, actions and speech should be different from that of during the week. Of course the level to which this is taken varies from person to person as it depends on one's spiritual purification and perfection.

Let us begin at the top –

The *Mishna Berura* writes² that one who refrains from speaking about weekday matters on Shabbos will be called **holy**. He continues saying that "people of deeds" would only speak in *Lashon HaKodesh* on Shabbos, even when essential matters are involved, in order not to be drawn into idle chatter.

Is that type of conduct not meant for very pious people?

To conduct oneself in such a manner for an entire Shabbos is indeed above most of our spiritual levels. Nevertheless it does not mean that we are exempt from knowing where we should be heading and what we must strive for. For example, the *Mishna Berura*³ cites the *Sheloh HaKadosh*⁴ who says that one who greets a fellowman on Shabbos should not greet him in

² M"B *siman* 307:5.

³ M"B *siman* 307:5.

⁴ *HaRav Yeshaya Horowitz* - Born: Prague, Czechoslovakia, 1565. He studied in Prague and served as Rav in Poland, Lithuania, and Germany. He returned to Prague as Rosh Yeshiva in 1615 and was appointed Rav of Jerusalem in 1622. Author of *Shnei Luchot HaBrit/Sheloh*, a classical work on Halacha, customs, and Kabbalah, written around the 613 Commandments as they appear in each parsha. The author gives kabbalistic interpretations of the laws as well as its ethical implications. (Adapted from the biography written by R' Shlomo Pereira).

¹ *Rama* in *siman* 253:1 and the *Bi'ur Halacha* ד"ה "ואם החזירה" ו-"דינו כשכח".

the weekday fashion - good morning etc. rather one should say *gut Shabbos* or *Shabbat Shalom*, in order to fulfill the *mitzvah* of remembering the Shabbos.

We all conduct ourselves in this manner (although we may not have been aware of the reason for it) because we know Shabbos is different. (For this reason some have the custom not to say good night, before going to sleep on Shabbos, because it is Shabbos and one should say *gut Shabbos* or *Shabbat Shalom*).⁵

Are there any restrictions as to which thoughts are permitted on Shabbos and which are not?

From a purely halachic view point we learn from the *posuke* that states **וְדַבֵּר דָּבָר** – that certain **speech** is forbidden on Shabbos, not thoughts, and one may think about one's business on Shabbos. However, the *Shulchan Aruch*⁶ writes that one should not think about business matters at all because of *oneg Shabbos*, especially if it causes worry and anxiety.

The *Mechaber* continues that one should feel on Shabbos as if one has concluded all of one's business transactions and the *M"B* says this is learned from **שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל מְלַאכְתְּךָ** – one should conclude all of one's work in 6 days, and that comes about because it should be that when Shabbos begins - **וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת**, it should be as if one's business is concluded. When Shabbos begins there is no need for more work. This indeed is a high plane for one who is in the middle of a complicated business issue, but it is expected of us.

What if my business is B"H very successful. May I not think about it?

Thinking about and being excited about \$1,000,000 in the bank is not a crime, but it will most probably lead to problems. One will start thinking whether it is invested wisely, is it earning enough etc. The same with a successful business. There are many complicated matters involved and one will begin to think about them on Shabbos. The optimal conduct on Shabbos therefore, is to

totally disconnect one's mind from such matters and focus on more spiritual matters.

Am I permitted to walk through my vegetable patch on Shabbos?

The *Shulchan Aruch*⁷ says that one may not stand next to one's field during the reaping or the plowing season and see what the field requires.⁸ The same would apply to walking through a vegetable patch and deciding what needs to be picked, which vegetables require watering etc.

Did we not learn that one may think⁹ about one's matters and here, after all, one is merely thinking and not doing anything?

Indeed thinking and contemplating *per se* is permitted but in the above cases one is actually walking in the vegetable patch or standing next to one's field during the plowing season and as such one's thoughts are "noticeable". One cannot say that it is merely thinking because one's thoughts are accompanied with the action of being in the 'wrong' place.¹⁰

Orchos Chaim LaRosh

what is the purpose of *Tefillah*? - כוון בתפילתך, כי התפילה היא עבודת הלב

Perhaps we can say that the purpose of *tefillah* is to connect. For example, the *Rambam* writes that *Shemone Esre* has three parts, praise, requests and thanks. We might think that the middle sections, requests, is the main purpose because we need to connect to Hashem and realize that everything comes from Him and we must ask Him for everything. That statement is true, but not complete, because one can connect just as much through praise by 'knowing' and recognizing that everything comes from Him, and that is expressed when praising Him.

⁵ I once saw another reason for this. On Shabbos it does not say **וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר**, and therefore there is no room for saying good night.

⁶ *Siman* 306:8.

⁷ *Siman* 306:1.

⁸ See *M"B* 306:1.

⁹ We also learned that it is preferable not to, but strict *halacha* does not forbid it unless it causes concern.

¹⁰ *M"B* *ibid*.

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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.