



Parshas Chayei Sarah 5771

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May one tear a piece of glad-wrap from the roll on Shabbos?

Destructive tearing on Shabbos is merely an *issur d'rabanan* but constructive tearing on Shabbos is an *issur d'oraisso* (a biblical violation).¹ The *Mishna Berura* writes² that tearing paper in order to use the torn pieces is a beneficial tearing and hence it would be an *issur d'oraisso*.³ Accordingly, tearing a piece of Glad Wrap or aluminum foil from the roll infringes on an *issur d'oraisso* and may not be done on Shabbos for any reason.⁴ However, tearing open the glad wrap that is covering a bowl of salad is totally permitted as one is destructing the glad wrap and it is being done to attain the contents of the bowl and not for the sake of tearing the wrapping. This latter *halacha* is learned from a *Tosefta*⁵ that teaches us that one may rip the leather covering a barrel in order to reach the wine.

What about tearing toilet paper when there is no option?

Obviously one must prepare toilet paper before Shabbos. The problem arises when one has depleted the supply of tissues, torn toilet paper etc. or one is in a place where there is no pre-torn paper. For obvious reasons we will not discuss the various technical options that are on hand when there is no toilet paper available, but when those

options are exhausted and/or one's only practical option is uncut toilet paper, the following is the correct procedure:

One should tear the toilet paper by resting one's elbows on the sheet of toilet paper and tear it with one's elbows. This is called tearing *keilachar yad* – in a backhanded manner, and is only an *issur d'rabanan*.⁶

Where do we find that one may violate an issur d'rabanan in such a case?

There are two sources. The *Rama* says⁷ that one may carry stones (olden day toilet paper) from a *reshus hayachid* (a private domain) into a *carmelis* even though one is violating an *issur d'rabanan*. The basis for this *beter* is that *Chazal* did not institute their prohibition when it confronts a person's dignity – *כבוד הבריות*. The other source is the *Mechaber*⁸ who permits one to raise a stone that has moss growing on it even though raising it from the ground is a violation of an *issur d'rabanan*. This therefore is the basis for this *beter*.

Does it make a difference whether toilet paper is torn on the perforated line?

To answer this question we must, in a few words, familiarize ourselves with the *melacha* of *Mechatech* – tearing or cutting to an exact size or measurement.

מהתך is the *melacha* of cutting or tearing an item for a specific purpose or size. An example of this is a *gemora* which says that one who purposely breaks the feather between the soft part and hard

¹ Rambam Hilchos Shabbos 10:10.

² M"B siman 340:41, based on siman 340 se'if 14.

³ The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* siman 340:17 has a different definition of the *melacha* of *Kore'ah*, see inside.

⁴ See the SS"K 23 footnote 46 in the name of Rav Shlomo Zalman.

⁵ See M"B 314:25.

⁶ SS"K 23:16.

⁷ Simon 312:1 and M"B 8.

⁸ Simon 312:3 and M"B 12.

part has violated *Mechatech*. The soft part would be used for down and pillows and the hard part would be used for hat manufacturing. Since one is particular about breaking the feather at that exact point, it is *mechatech*.

Based on this and many other proofs we can determine that although tearing toilet paper involves *Kore'ah* and maybe even “making a *k'li*”, tearing on the dotted line is probably not *Mechatech*. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach explains⁹ that one only tears on the perforated line because it is a convenient manner of tearing the paper but not because one is particular about the exact size of the paper. Proof of that is that each paper company has a different size paper and nobody buys paper because company A has paper size B.

This means that one may only tear paper backhandedly, as mentioned above, when there is no other feasible option, but one need not be particular about not cutting on the perforated line. However, we do not find this opinion mentioned in other *poskim* and therefore, if possible, one should avoid tearing on the perforated line.¹⁰

May an adult hand a child food that is not kosher?

In three different cases the *gemora* in *Yevamos* 114a¹¹ teaches us that an adult may not hand a child an *issur*, regardless of the child's age.¹²

The first case deals with handing a child something forbidden to eat. The *posuk* in *Vayikra* (11:42) says **לֹא תֹאכְלוּ כִּי שֶׁקֶץ הֵם**, and the *gemora* teaches that the *Torah* is telling us **לֹא תֹאכְלוּ** – we must not feed a child an *issur*. This has nothing to do with the *mitzvah* of *chinuch* – educating a child to perform and heed the *mitzvos*, rather it is a negative commandment prohibiting adults from feeding a child an *issur*.

The second case refers to the *issur* of drinking blood. The *posuk* in *Vayikra* (17:12) says **דֵּם כָּל נֶפֶשׁ מִכֶּם לֹא תֹאכַל**, and since this *issur* was

written previously, the *gemora* understands that it is teaching us that an adult may not feed blood to a child.

The last case deals with **טומאה** – impurity. The *posuk* in *Vayikra* (21:1) says **אָמַר אֱלֹהִים בְּנֵי אָהֶרֶן וְאִמְרַת**, from the seemingly superfluous word **וְאִמְרַת** – you shall say to, the *gemora* understands that we are prohibited from handing a child-Cohen something that will cause him to be defiled. The *poskim* learn¹³ that these three *halachos* teach us that one may not hand a child any *issur*, even if it is only an *issur d'rabanan*.

What if I am merely placing it in his hand, or placing him next to the issur or the issur next to the child?

The *gemora Shabbos* at the end of the 9th *perek* says that one may not hand a child a non-kosher grasshopper, lest it dies and the child will eat it. (I suppose that this exact scene would not take place nowadays but the ramifications of this case are definitely pertinent). *Rashi* there explains that placing the *issur* in the child's hand is akin to feeding him the *issur*. It follows that placing the *issur* in front of the child, in a way that the child will certainly take it, is similar to handing it to him and if through one's action the child can partake of the *issur*, one may not do it.

Orchos Chaim LaRosh

וּפְזָר מִמוֹנֶךָ כְּאִשֶּׁר הוּא רְצוֹנוֹ, כִּי בִידּוֹ לִמְלָאוֹת
חֲסְרוֹנוֹךְ וְלִתְּתֵי טָרֶף בְּנֵי בֵיתְךָ – spread your money according to His will, because He can replace your loss and feed your household. We must not think that by giving charity our finances will be depleted, and by doing chessed (obviously within halachic limits) that our families and children will lose out. A king assists those that help his children.

⁹ תיקונים ומילואים פכ"ג הערה נ"ה.

¹⁰ Hagaon HaRav Sternbuch shlita.

¹¹ 6 lines from the bottom of the *amud*.

¹² *Shulchan Aruch* HaRav 343:5, *M"b* 343:3 and *Sha'ar Ha'tsiun* 6.

¹³ *M"b* 343:4 and *Sha'ar Ha'tsiun* 12.

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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.