

# THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

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The previous shiur discussed the complex *halachos* of presenting a child with an *issur* or placing it before him, we will *be”H* continue with these *halachos*.

**What if the child is ill and requires the issur for his health?**

We must differentiate between an *issur d'oraissa* (biblically forbidden) and an *issur d'rabanan*. One may not hand or feed the child an *issur d'oraissa* (such as *chametz* on Pesach) unless it is *pikuach nefesh* – the child's life is in danger.<sup>1</sup> An *issur d'rabanan* is different as there are *poskim*<sup>2</sup> who hold that one may hand a child an *issur d'rabanan* when he requires it, even if he is not ill, and therefore when ill one may rely on those *poskim*.<sup>3</sup>

Normally one may not instruct a gentile to feed a child an *issur*, even if the *issur* is only *osur mid'rabanan* such as food cooked on Shabbos,<sup>4</sup> but when a child is ill and he requires that particular food, one may instruct a gentile to feed it to him.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to note that nowadays it is quite rare that one has to rely on the *heter* to feed a child an *issur d'oraissa*, as many items are kashrus supervised and are relatively easy to obtain.

**May an adult instruct a child on Shabbos to turn on the lights?**

<sup>1</sup> *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 343:5.

<sup>2</sup> The *Rashba* and the *Ran*, see the *Bi'ur Halacha simon* 343 ס"ה מ"ד.

<sup>3</sup> *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 343:6

<sup>4</sup> It is *osur mid'oraissa* to cook on Shabbos but the prohibition not to eat that food is only an *issur d'rabanan*.

<sup>5</sup> *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 343:5 and *M"B* 343:5.

Accordingly an adult may not instruct a child to turn on a light on Shabbos because telling him or instructing is similar to handing an *issur* to him,<sup>6</sup> and is forbidden.

**If a child turned on the lights may adults benefit from them?**

If the child turned on the lights for the benefit of others it is forbidden to benefit from those lights until after Shabbos.<sup>7</sup> If the child turned the lights on for his own benefit an adult may benefit from them as well.

**If one forgot to turn out the refrigerator light may one ask a child to open the refrigerator door?**

Refrigerators doors are set up in such a way that when the door is opened the light comes on. Being that it is something that always takes place, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach זצ"ה<sup>8</sup> prefers to refer to it as a direct action and not as a *p'sik reisha*. Accordingly one may not direct one's child to open the refrigerator if the light will be turned on, because one is directing a child to perform an *issur*. This is true of a neighbor's child and all the more so of one's own child.

<sup>6</sup> *M"B* 343:5.

<sup>7</sup> *Bi'ur Halacha simon* 325:10 ה"ה א"י שמיילא. One must also wait before benefiting the time of *shiyush*, i.e. the time it takes to do the *issur*. Lights are not an issue because one can turn the lights off and turn them on again. In any case the time it takes to turn lights on is negligible.

<sup>8</sup> See the *SS"K* 31 footnote 1.

## What then is the solution?

The preferred solution is to have a gentile open the refrigerator door.<sup>9</sup> If we regard the turning on of the light as a *p'sik reisha*, a gentile may perform a *p'sik reisha* on Shabbos. This is based on a few examples, one of them being the following case:

The *Rama*<sup>10</sup> says that we may not instruct a gentile to heat food on Shabbos, but the solution is to have the gentile place the food on the heater when the heater is turned off, and by turning on the heater to heat the house (which a gentile is permitted to do in cold climates) the food will be heated indirectly – through a *p'sik reisha*.

Even if we refer to turning on the light as a direct action (Rav Shlomo Zalman above) there is nevertheless room to permit a gentile open the door.<sup>11</sup>

## What if there is no gentile available?

One should have a child pull out the refrigerator plug from the socket when the refrigerator motor has stopped.<sup>12</sup> Since the child is only handling *muktze*, a *d'rabanan*, and it is for the sake of a *mitzvah* of the Shabbos meal, there is room to permit such an action, when it is done for the essential foods for the *Shabbos* meal such as fish and meat, which without one would not have *omeg Shabbos*.

This is based on the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 343:8 which permits using a child to violate an *issur d'rabanan* for the sake of a *mitzvah* provided that it is not a common occurrence. Needless to say that the plug may not be returned to the socket.<sup>13</sup>

## If I see that my child is about to do an *issur* must I prevent him from doing so?

<sup>9</sup> *SS"K* Ibid

<sup>10</sup> *Simon* 253:5 and *M"B* 99.

<sup>11</sup> *SS"K* ibid. This is because there are ways to open the door without turning on the light, such as inserting a knife between the door and the refrigerator and pressing on the light switch while opening the door, thus disabling the light switch.

<sup>12</sup> Rav Shlomo Zalman in the *SS"K* 10:14 and footnote 38.

<sup>13</sup> *SS"K* 10:14

We learned that an adult is biblically prohibited from handing a child an *issur*. In contrast, one is not biblically obliged to prevent a child from performing or from partaking of an *issur* when doing so for his own benefit. However, *Chazal* obligate parents<sup>14</sup> to **educate** their children in the ways of the Torah. If a child is of an age that he understands not to do something when told, the parents must educate him in that vein.

## Would it not depend on the age of the child?

Absolutely. If a one year old is turning a light on and off on Shabbos there is no obligation to prevent him doing so, because the child does not understand what the parent wants from him. (It is possible that when other children see that the child is not prevented from doing '*chilul Shabbos*' it will have an adverse effect on their own Shabbos observance and there is room to find alternative entertainment for the child, but the child *per se* need not be prevented). A child who begins to understand the word "Shabbos" and associates it with not doing certain actions should be trained in the observance of Shabbos.

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## Orchos Chaim LaRosh

דַע אֶת אֲלֹקֶיךָ אֱלֹהִיךָ – Know your father's G-d. The *Rambam* writes (ריש הלכות יסודי התורה) that one must **know** and believe, and Rav Chaim Soloveitchik זצ"ל explained that the Mitzvah of **knowing** applies to one's mental capability of understanding and comprehension. From that level onwards begins the mitzvah of *emunah*.

One can attempt to **know** *Hashem* by observing His creations, which includes our own bodies, celestial beings etc. Eventually, the *Rambam* writes, this will lead to *Ahavas Hashem*.

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<sup>14</sup> The *M"B* 343:2 writes that there are *Achronim* who hold that education – *chinuch* is also the responsibility of the mother.

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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*.