



# THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

## HALACHA SERIES ON HILCHOS SHABBOS

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### RABBI DOVID OSTROFF shlita

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These halachos were shown by Rabbi Ostroff to HaGaon HaRau Moshe Sternbuch, shlita



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**May I ask a gentile to accompany me to the basement when I know that the light will be switched on for us in the dark basement?**

This case is not the same as the one mentioned in the previous shiur, <sup>1</sup> because now the Jew is deriving direct physical benefit from the light switched on by the gentile and the essential purpose of going to the basement is for the Jew's benefit.

**May I request a gentile to bring me a bottle of Coke from the basement knowing that a light will be switched on to look for it?**

This case is similar to the first case because the light is being switched on to aid the gentile in the task and the Jew is not deriving direct physical benefit from the new light. <sup>2</sup> The general rule is that the gentile may do anything to aid in the task, provided that there is a permitted way to do the task, because otherwise it is as if he has been instructed to violate an *issur*.

**What else would you include in this rule?**

A gentile who is asked to bring food to the 15<sup>th</sup> floor of a hotel may use the elevator, because it is being used for the gentile's own benefit.

When I request a gentile to clean the floor, since there is a way that it can be done *b'beter*, i.e. without squeezing a cloth, the gentile may do it in any way he sees fit.

**May the gentile wash my dishes in hot water?**

According to many *poskim*, for numerous reasons there are problems in using hot water from a hot water system. The gentile might use the hot water for several reasons: either to

properly clean the dishes or for physical comfort. Assuming that it is necessary to wash the dishes in hot water to clean them, it is a problem, because the gentile will be violating an *issur* when using the hot water and there is no real way to bring them to similar results in a permitted manner. <sup>3</sup> If, however the hot water is being used for physical benefit by the gentile, it is permitted.

**May one permit a gentile to vacuum the carpet on Shabbos?**

According to the above, it would then seem that a gentile may use a vacuum cleaner to clean the carpets because similarly, it can be done in a permitted manner.

Before we answer the question we must briefly explain the issue of cleaning carpets on Shabbos. The *Rama* <sup>4</sup> writes that one may not shake a garment on Shabbos in order to remove the dust thereon. The *Mishna Berura* <sup>5</sup> explains that the *halacha* is referring to dust absorbed into the garment and not to dust lying on top of the garment. The *Mechaber*, <sup>6</sup> on the other hand, says that one may not shake dew from a garment and does not prohibit the shaking of dust. The *Mishna Berura* says <sup>7</sup> that one may permit a gentile to dust one's clothing (relying on the *Mechaber*) especially when dusty clothes will cause embarrassment.

**So up to this point it seems that vacuuming should be permitted by a gentile?**

<sup>1</sup> A gentile may use the dishwasher.

<sup>2</sup> *M"B siman 276:27*.

<sup>3</sup> Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach זצ"ל in the *SS"K* 31 footnote \*31.

<sup>4</sup> *Siman 302:1*.

<sup>5</sup> *M"B siman 302:5*.

<sup>6</sup> *Siman 302:1*.

<sup>7</sup> *M"B siman 302:6*.

There is another issue involved called **אורשא מילתא** – making noise. The *Rama*<sup>8</sup> deals with the following issue: a person would fill the container of a water mill with wheat and the mill would then grind the wheat automatically. The *Rama* says that one may not fill the container close to Shabbos because the grinding may be heard outside and people might think that one was grinding on Shabbos. The *Rama* continues that it is permitted though to wind a grandfather clock before Shabbos even though the ticking (and the chimes) will be heard on Shabbos as it is known that one winds a clock before Shabbos and the noise emitting from the clock is due to the initial winding. The *Mishna Berura*<sup>9</sup> adds that it is prohibited to wind the clock on Shabbos and one may not ask a gentile to wind it either. Accordingly, we would say that the gentile may not vacuum the carpet as it can be heard outside and people will suspect one of violating the Shabbos.

### ***Does this prohibition apply to Sephardim as well?***

The basis for this question is that the *Mechaber*<sup>10</sup> permits operating the mill before Shabbos and is not concerned with **אורשא מילתא**.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly it would seem that the Sephardim who follow the *Mechaber* may permit a gentile to use a vacuum cleaner when the carpet could be cleaned *b'heter*. The problem is however that a vacuum cleans far better than one can with one's hands and therefore it may be forbidden for a gentile to use a vacuum. One should ask one's *rav* for a *p'sak* in this matter.

### ***May I hand money to a gentile before Shabbos with instructions to purchase something for me without specifying that I want it bought on Shabbos?***

<sup>8</sup> *Rama siman* 252:5.

<sup>9</sup> *M"B siman* 252:50.

<sup>10</sup> *Siman* 252:5.

<sup>11</sup> The *machlokes* between the *Mechaber* and the *Rama* is based on a *machlokes* in the *gemora Shabbos* 18a between Raba and Rav Yosef. (The *Vilna Ga'on* writes that the *Be'er HaGolah* who annotates the *Mechaber* as following Raba is incorrect, because the *Mechaber* is like Rav Yosef and the *Rama* is like Raba).

The *Shulchan Aruch* writes<sup>12</sup> that one may hand money to a gentile with instructions to make a purchase, provided that the request does not specify making the purchase on Shabbos. The *Mishna Berura*<sup>13</sup> cites the *poskim* saying that this only applies when the gentile is being paid for working, in which case it is considered as if it is being done for the gentile's own benefit – to receive his pay. If the gentile is not paid or rewarded for working, when making the purchase on Shabbos, we view it as if it is work being done for the Jew - and is forbidden.

Another stipulation is that it is possible to make this purchase on a day other than Shabbos.<sup>14</sup> If, for example, the purchase can only be made on Shabbos, or the only time you ask the gentile to make the purchase is Shabbos, then even without requesting that it be bought on Shabbos, it is prohibited. This would be similar to telling him to make the purchase on Shabbos.

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### Orchos Chaim LaRosh

**אהוב המוכיחים** – Love those that reprove. Asking for reproof or criticism seems contrary to everything we do and live for, who wants admonition? Who wants to be criticized? And when someone dares criticize us we are so quick to defend ourselves. But the truth is that we cannot or prefer not see our faults, which for a growing **ירא שמים** is unhealthy, because one can constantly be making mistakes and not fulfill Hashem's will, so if finally we hear reproof about ourselves, we should grab the reproof and correct whatever we can. Consequently, the Rosh writes – love those that reprove as they are your ticket to a better life.

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<sup>12</sup> *Siman* 307:4.

<sup>13</sup> *M"B siman* 307:14.

<sup>14</sup> *M"B siman* 307:15.

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If you would like to send a question to Rav Ostroff, you can write to him at [shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com](mailto:shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com).

**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.