

# HALOCHOSCOPE

**This week's question:**

Over the course of *Shabbos*, many *seforim* are taken off shelves and left on the tables. They are returned to their shelves after *Shabbos*. May the *seforim* be put back on their shelves before *Shabbos* is out, such as at *mincha* time?

**The issues:**

- A) *Tircha yesaira*, unnecessary exertion; *uvda dechol*, mundane activities on *Shabbos*
- B) *Borair*, sorting good from bad, as it applies to *seforim*
- C) *Hachanah*, preparing on *Shabbos* for after *Shabbos*

## A) *Tircha yesaira*; *uvda dechol*

Along with *melachos*, that are Scripturally forbidden on *Shabbos*, many things are forbidden Rabbinically. Some were instituted as a safeguard or precautionary measure to help prevent violation, even inadvertently, of Scriptural *melachos*. Others were instituted for more positive reasons, such as to enhance the atmosphere and the spirit of *Shabbos*. They are based on positive *mitzvos*, that are considered quasi-Scriptural, since they come directly from the Prophetic texts. They indicate a special kedusha, sanctity, that one should try to experience. This requires an adjustment to one's everyday activity.

The Talmud derives various positive *mitzvos* of *Shabbos* from the words on the *Navi Yeshaya* (58:13): “If, because of *Shabbos*, you turn your feet back from going about your business in the usual way and you call *Shabbos* “delight”, the holy thing of Hashem, “honored”, and you honor it by not going on your ways, in dealing with your affairs and discussing the mundane ...” The general sense is to practice different behavior on *Shabbos*, to elevate its atmosphere.

*Uvda dechol* is one such category, forbidden due to the *kedusha* of *Shabbos*. An additional reason given for the prohibition of these activities is that the activity could lead to forgetting about *Shabbos*. Thus, it is considered *zilzul Shabbos*, disrespecting *Shabbos*, which is the opposite of *kavod Shabbos*, honoring *Shabbos*. This is especially true when one is occupied in an exerting activity. The activity will not involve *melacha per se*, but it will detract from the peace, rest and serenity of *Shabbos*.

The Talmud discusses the clearing of space in a storage area or barn to accommodate unexpected guests or to make room for people to study Torah. In these instances, it is permitted on a limited scale, which is enough for the particular number of guests or students. It must be done in the way that involves the least possible *tircha*. Rather than making many trips with smaller loads, which is easier but more time-consuming, one should make fewer trips with larger loads, which is less bother. Presumably, too, this way there is less chance of the person becoming so preoccupied with his clearing that he forgets about *Shabbos*. Furthermore, by shortening the time he is exerting himself, he leaves

more of *Shabbos* later when he can relax.

In our case, the issue is, is it necessary to move these *seforim* to make space? On the other hand, the area being cleared is not a storage area. It is in fact a living space that is being used all the time. It could well be argued that there is an opposite purpose being served here, that of *kavod Shabbos* [see Section C]. One may certainly return individual *seforim* to their places on a shelf, to clear space on the table. [See *Shabbos* 126b-127a, Poskim. Tur, BY Sh Ar OC 333, 337, commentaries.]

## **B) Borair**

One of the *melachos* involved in preparing bread is *borair*, sorting. After winnowing the grain to remove chaff, it is swept up on the ground, and pebbles and other extraneous matter is mixed in with the grain. It must be sorted before it is milled. The bad parts, including the dirt and pebbles, are removed. This is a constructive activity, and anything like it is forbidden on *Shabbos*. Thus, one may not sort a mixture, removing the bad components and leaving behind the good. When eating, one must take extra care to avoid violating *borair*. He may not separate the parts of the food that he does not wish to eat from the rest of the food that he plans on eating.

There is a way to sort without violating *borair*, by fulfilling three basic conditions: **a) beyad**, using one's hands rather than a tool or utensil made for separating, like a sieve or slotted spoon. A regular spoon or fork is considered an extension of the hand. **b) miyad**, only what is needed for immediate use will be sorted, but not what will be set aside for later. **c) ochel mitoch pesoless**, the good must be removed from the mixture, leaving behind the undesired parts. In addition, if the food is not in a true mixture, but each piece is identifiably separate already, there is no issue of *borair*.

The rules of *borair* apply to other items besides foodstuffs. For example, one may not sort clothing on *Shabbos*. Similarly, according to most poskim, one may not sort *seforim*. When *seforim* are standing upright in their places on a shelf, they are not considered mixed. Each has its own place. Choosing one, even not for immediate use, does not constitute *borair*. A mixture of *seforim* would include a pile or group of *seforim* lying in a way that there is a measure of sorting needed to separate them. Thus, if the *chumashim* are all in neat piles of their own, or even if they are haphazardly lying on the tables, but are separate, one may choose all of them from the table and return them to the shelf, without violating *borair*. Furthermore, according to some poskim, maintaining order for *kavod Shabbos* can be considered a *miyad* need. Therefore, one may return individual *seforim* to their places on the shelf.

Taking the top *sefer* off a pile is not considered *borair*. It is not being removed from a mixture. The same is true of a *sefer* on the bottom of the pile. The *seforim* on top of it may be lifted off, and this *sefer* may be taken. Therefore, if one wishes to do so, he could get to a *sefer* in the middle of a pile in a permissible manner. He could lift off the *seforim* on top of it exposing it as the top *sefer* on the remaining pile. He can then remove it. To further remove concern for *borair*, the poskim recommend that one should look into each *sefer* after picking it up. Thus, he has taken the 'good' because he needed that *sefer*. [See *Shabbos* 74a-b, poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 319:esp. 3, commentaries, Ar Hash 7-9. Bris Olam, Borair 2-4. Kitzur Hilchos Shabbos 12:22.]

### C) *Hachanah*

It is forbidden to prepare on *Shabbos* for after *Shabbos* even if no *melacha* is violated. This means that one may not do anything that is not needed for the same day, but is being done in preparation for the next day, even if it does not involve an activity that is otherwise forbidden on *Shabbos*. The Talmud debates whether this is a Scriptural or Rabbinical prohibition, but the consensus of most poskim is to forbid it Scripturally. Thus, one may not prepare the wine for *havdalah* before *Shabbos* is over. Nor may one clear the table, make a bed, wash dishes after *seuda shlishis*, or the like. It is forbidden to bring a *megillah* to shul on *Shabbos*, when *Purim* falls on Sunday. One may not even ask a child to bring it. One could bring it to *shul* early in the day, inconspicuously, and then use it to learn from, to avoid *hachanah*. [This assumes we do not consider the *megillah muktzeh*. See MB 688:18.] One may not fold his *talis* after using it for *shacharis*, because he is preparing it for after *Shabbos*, or for next *Shabbos*. If he plans to use it for *mincha*, he may fold it after *shacharis*. It should be noted that folding clothing can involve a *melacha* connected to *libun*, the laundering process. This depends on the type of folds and manner of folding. Here we are referring to a permissible type of folding. [If he does not plan to use it that day, he may not fold it in its special folds. However, to avoid *bizuy mitzvah*, disgracing a *mitzvah* item, many poskim maintain that it should still be folded in a respectful way, avoiding the original creases. After *Shabbos*, he will then refold it in its original creases.] One may wash the dishes after the evening *seuda* to have them ready for the daytime *seuda*, in a way that is permissible on *Shabbos*. He may not do the same after *seuda shlishis*.

This means that if something is definitely done for *Shabbos* as well as after *Shabbos*, it is not considered *hachanah*. Accordingly, one may put away the *seforim* so that they are organized and easy to find. This would be done anyhow, to make them available for those who wish to use them on *Shabbos*. However, if it is obvious that no-one will be learning from them again, for example, if the item was used for a *shiur* early in the day, that will not be taught again later, this would not work. Furthermore, the item would need to be used early enough in the day to avoid the appearance of *hachanah*. In our case, the *seforim* are being returned to their shelves so close to the end of *Shabbos*, that realistically there will be little time for their being taken off the shelves again.

However, there is another factor to be considered here. The same source for ensuring the spirit of *Shabbos* also demands *kavod Shabbos*, respecting and honoring *Shabbos*. Many poskim maintain that this refers to preparing before *Shabbos*, as opposed to *oneg*, which refers to enjoying *Shabbos* on the day. Nonetheless, if one did not make the requisite preparations before *Shabbos*, he should show respect on *Shabbos*. Thus, as long as the activity does not involve *melacha*, he should do it to honor *Shabbos*. One should tidy his bed before *Shabbos*. If he did not do so, he should do it on *Shabbos*. One may not allow *bizayon*, disgrace of *Shabbos*. He should not leave his bed untidy, especially if he is the type to keep it tidy at other times. The same would be true of sweeping the floor (in a permissible manner) or clearing the table. By this reasoning, if the *shul* is usually kept tidy, with the *seforim* being returned a few times a day, they may be returned whenever those responsible feel the need. In this respect, rather than doing a mundane activity, it is

really being done for the exact opposite reason!

In addition, the concept we mentioned earlier with regard to *bizuy mitzvah* on a *talis* could also apply here. *Seforim* are holy items. The Talmud entertains a discussion about *seforim* being left in a state of *bizayon* on *Shabbos*. Certain activities that would normally be Rabbinically forbidden are permitted to save them from *bizayon*. The Talmud debates which activities are included. In our case, provided one avoids *borair*, a Scriptural matter, the activities that could arise are Rabbinically forbidden. Therefore, this factor could be added to mitigate matters, if indeed the *seforim* are lying around in disarray. Once again, the level of *bizayon* could be subjective. If it is a place where this disarray is not tolerated, there is indeed some measure of *bizayon kisvei kodesh*.

The caveat here is that those doing the returning may not be 'saving time' by doing it early instead of after *maariv*. In that case, the activity is not really in honor of *Shabbos*, but is really *hachanah*. We mentioned that the poskim suggest a way to mitigate the *borair* issue, which also works to mitigate the *hachanah* issue. When one picks up a *sefer*, he should open it and read something. This way, he can claim that he is taking the 'good' from the 'bad' to be used immediately. He can also claim to be doing the activity for the needs of that day. [See Eruvin 95a-b 96b-97b, Beitzah 2b 17a, Pesachim 46b, Shabbos 66b, Poskim. Tur, Sh Ar OC 254:7 MA 23, MB 43, 301:20, 302:3-4 (MB, Dirshu), 323:6, 337, 352, 503, 667, 693:1, commentaries.]

In conclusion, the *seforim* may be returned in honor of *Shabbos* and of the *seforim*. Thus, if the *shul* looks untidy and not in the spirit of *Shabbos*, and the *seforim* are in disarray, and this *shul* cares about its appearance, especially on *Shabbos*, it may and should be tidied up. If one needs the space on the tables, the *seforim* may be put away. *Borair* can be avoided by picking up the *seforim* from the tops of the piles. In addition, one should look inside each *sefer* as he picks it up. It may not be done for convenience, to save time from doing it after *Shabbos*.

**On the Parsha ...** .. [Bilaam] saw Israel, resting according to its tribes, and the spirit of Hashem came upon him .. How goodly are your tents, O Jacob, Your tabernacles, O Israel .. [24:2 5] Tents, these are the houses of worship and study .. [Rashi etc.]. What was it about seeing the tribes resting peacefully that aroused the spirit in Bilaam? It is also interesting to note that the blessings he gave were mostly related to beautiful things in harmony with one another. The commentaries say that he saw the camps of the tribes in orderly arrangement. They were not mixed up with each other. This was his inspiration. Orderliness is a sign of spirituality. If the tents are in order, the *shuls* and study halls will be in order. This was itself a blessing, that they should indeed be orderly. Indeed, they should be kept orderly, and this will inspire orderly study and prayer. If they are in disarray, it will be more difficult to be inspired in these surroundings. Tidying up a *shul* is needed for the immediate present, to enable properly inspired *tefilah* and Torah.

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