

HALOCHOSCOPE

Congregation Shaaray Tefillah, Pittsburgh, PA 15217

There are a number of corrections to be made to previous issues. In Vol I No 6, Section A, last paragraph should read: "Tovel Bakli- Even if a bathtub is connected to the ground, meaning that it does not become Tomei and that the water is not necessarily considered She'uvim, it is still..."

Later in the same paragraph: "If the bathtub is made of plastic or earthenware and has a hole in the bottom before it is attached to the ground..." (Courtesy of Rabbi Altein)

In Vol I No 7, Section C, last paragraph should read: "By the same... to shul late on Shabbos afternoon in order... Rather, one should bring it to shul earlier in the afternoon, inconspicuously..." (Courtesy of Rabbi Eisen)

This week's question:

If a humidifier is plugged in and running when Shabbos begins, may one refill it with water on Shabbos?

The issues to be discussed:

- A. The use of electricity on Shabbos.
- B. The applications of the Melacha of *Zoreh* - winnowing.
- C. *Muktza* - the prohibition against moving things that are unsuitable for use on Shabbos.

A. Electricity

Lighting a fire is a Melacha, *Hav'arah*, and is Scripturally forbidden on Shabbos. Adding fuel to a fire or oil to a lamp is included in this prohibition. The actual translation of *Hav'arah* is "burning" which means that it is forbidden to burn any material, which includes kindling any flame. Although a question is raised as to whether a flame that does not consume any fuel is considered *Hav'arah*, and that it is therefore permissible to switch on an electric light, this is based on the false impression given by the fact that the lightbulb is not burned up. This is a mistake. In fact, electricity is usually generated by burning fuel and the light-bulb burns this electricity, thereby burning the original fuel. Even in cases where no physical fuel is used to generate the electricity, such as hydro- or solar-powered generators, the electricity is nevertheless burned up. The consensus of Halachic authorities is to consider switching on electric lights as a Melacha - a Scriptural prohibition.

Kibuy- extinguishing a flame or fire is also forbidden, but not always Scripturally. If the intention at the time of extinguishing is to create coal or charcoal, it is a Scriptural prohibition. At all other times, it is forbidden Rabbinnically. Included in this is the prohibition is the removal of oil from a lamp that is burning.

There is some discussion about the removal of wax from a candle which does not affect the flame at the time it is removed. There is also some discussion if and when indirectly extinguishing a fire is permitted. All of this is really beyond the scope of this issue. Most authorities agree that cutting off the power supply, thereby extinguishing an electric light is forbidden anyway.

If, however, the electricity is not being burned in a flame or fire, but is being used to power the motor of an appliance, there is no clear Melacha of Hav'arah. Although there is one major authority who forbids turning the switch on because he considers it *Boneh*, building, (since two previously unconnected wires are now joined and a circuit is completed,) most authorities consider it a questionable Scriptural, but definitely Rabbinic, prohibition based on the Scriptural prohibition of Hav'arah. Since the metal in the wires and other parts of the motor get hot, this, too, raises the problem of Hav'arah or *Bishul*, cooking. [See Rambam Hilchos Shabbos 12,1 and Raavad. See also Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 277, Mishneh Berurah 22, but see also Igros Moshe Orach Chaim Vol 3 No 50.] However, since one really wants the wire to stay cool, this is not considered a Melacha; nevertheless, if it is certain that he will unwillingly heat the metal, it is forbidden Rabbinically. [P'sik Reisha] Therefore, it is categorically forbidden to operate any electric appliance on Shabbos.

Accordingly, it is forbidden to switch an appliance on or off on Shabbos. It is also forbidden to adjust the electricity of an appliance that is already operating, such as to change the speed or to adjust the volume using a variable resistor. Indirectly affecting the power supply to an appliance would also pose a problem. [For one comprehensive summary of the Halachic view of electricity on Shabbos and YomTov, see Tzitz Eliezer Vol I No 20.]

In our case, since the humidifier is already connected to the power supply there should be no reason to forbid adding water. There are, however, some sophisticated motors that can sense resistance and draw more electricity to compensate for the resistance and maintain its optimum speed where a regular motor would only slow down. Adding water to a humidifier with this motor would indirectly affect the power supply. However, it is highly unlikely that such a sophisticated motor would be used in a regular humidifier.

B. Zoreh

There is a Melacha called *Zoreh*, winnowing. This is a process in the production of flour. Before the grain is milled, the husks are separated by throwing the kernels into the wind. The heavy kernels fall back to the ground, while the lighter husks are blown away. Accordingly, anytime someone makes use of the wind to help him to spread something through the air, it should raise the issue of *Zoreh*. However, for a number of reasons, the Halachic authorities permit spraying water into the wind. [See Teshuvos R. Akiva Eger Vol I No 20, Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 319, Mishneh Berurah 67 and Biur Halacha.]

C. Muktzah

It is forbidden to move certain articles on Shabbos. This is a Rabbinic ordinance instituted in various stages beginning as early as the days of King David. [See Shabbos 30b.] Muktzah is literally *Muktzah Mida'ato*, meaning "cut off from one's mind". Something that has no permissible use on Shabbos is put out of mind. There are several levels of Muktzah, meaning that some categories of Muktzah may be

moved, but only under certain circumstances. Here we are concerned with two of the categories: *Kli Shemelachto Le'issur* - a utensil that is usually used to do something forbidden on Shabbos. For example, a hammer, which is normally used in construction which is forbidden as *Boneh*, is Muktzah. This may not be moved around "from the sunlight to the shade". However, if one needs to use the hammer itself to do something permissible, such as to crack open walnuts, one may use it. Also, if one needs the space where the hammer is now, one may move the hammer away on Shabbos. These two exclusions are known as *Letzorech Gufo Umekomo*.

A second category of Muktzah is *Chisaron Kis* - if an article is such that it has a limited use and is not used for any other purpose, such as certain types of knives and saws which one does not use except for their specific job in case they would become damaged. [See Shabbos 123b.] This type of Muktzah may not be moved even *Letzorech Gufo Umekomo*.

The Talmud's term to explain this more stringent Muktzah is *Meyached Lo Mekom*, one designates a place where it will remain for the whole Shabbos. This can be explained in two ways: Since Muktzah is in the mind, (a) is there a decision not to use the article and, as a consequence, not to move it, or (b) is there a decision not to move it around because it might be damaged and this directly makes it Muktzah? To illustrate the difference between these two approaches, let us take two examples. A radio is left on the table. May one move it off the table *Letzorech Mekomo*, to use the space underneath it? It has no permissible uses on Shabbos, and therefore a decision has been made not to use it, but it is not very fragile, so one has not made a decision not to move it. Therefore, according to the first approach it is *Chisaron Kis*, but not according to the second approach. Another example would be an expensive vase. On the one hand, it has permissible uses, such as a container for things, (although one may not put fresh-cut flowers with water in it on Shabbos). On the other hand, the decision has been made not to move it on Shabbos because of its fragility and value. [See Shabbos 123a Tosafos and Rabeinu Chananel and Shiltei Giborim Loshon Riaz on Shabbos 154b. Magen Avrohom and Beis Meir on Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 310,7. Nehorai Vol I pg 511.]

In our case, filling the humidifier raises the question of Muktzah. The tank of an ultrasonic humidifier is not connected to the electric power supply and can be removed and filled without a problem, but to fill the old cool-mist humidifiers, one has to lift the motor up to pour water into the storage tank. Although the unit as a whole is a *Kli Shemelachto Le'issur* and could be moved in order to use the space under it, the motor alone might be more stringent - *Chisaron Kis*, because one would not use this part of the appliance for any other uses for fear of damaging it. On the other hand, one might not mind moving it around because of fragility, since it is not really fragile. It is preferable to fill it by using a funnel through the slit where the mist is expelled.

In summary, in our case, there is no problem with filling a cool-mist humidifier in the manner described here. Understandably, filling a warm-mist vaporizer raises the issue of *Bishul*, cooking, since the water is heated, and is therefore forbidden.

NOTE: If someone inadvertently left the radio on before Shabbos, what can he do to silence it (besides covering it with pillows)? Adjusting the volume is forbidden. Adjusting the wavelength so that it is between stations raises the issue of *Tikun Kli-*

[See Halocholescope Vol I No 4.] Moving the antenna or the whole unit at an angle that does not allow it to receive is a problem of Mutza and could be done *Kile'achar Yad* (lit. "with the back of one's hand"), in an unusual way, if it is only considered a *Kli Shemelachto Le'issur*. This would depend on the two approaches mentioned above.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

SCHEDULE:

SHABBOS MINCHA	6:05 PM
SHACHARIS SUNDAY	8:00 AM
SHACHARIS MONDAY - FRIDAY	7:00 AM
MINCHA SUNDAY - THURSDAY	6:15 PM
MINCHA EREV SHABBOS VAYAKHEL-PIKUDEI	6:20 PM
CANDLE-LIGHTING VAYAKHEL-PIKUDEI	6:14 PM

SHIURIM:

GEMORO MAKOS	SUNDAY	7:15 AM
HALACHA B'IYUN	MONDAY	9:00 PM
HILCHOS SHABBOS	SHABBOS	8:15 AM
<u>HILCHOS PESACH</u>	SUNDAY MARCH 14TH	AT 8:00 PM
	AND SUNDAY MARCH 21ST	AT 8:00 PM

Topics to be covered: Cleaning, kashering, Bedikas
Chometz, checking out Chometz and Pesach products, the Seder.

Dr. and Mrs. Ben Teitelbaum invite all the mispalelim to Kiddush downstairs in honor of the Aufruf of their son, Shmuel.

Seudah Shellshis is being sponsored this week by the Goldblatts.

Reminder: This Motzoei Shabbos is the Kollel Melave Malka, at Shaare Torah at 8:45 pm. We hope to see you there.

This issue of HALOCHOSCOPE has been sponsored by Mr. Yehuda Goldblatt in memory of his mother, Mindel bas Chaim Todros A"H, whose Yorzite is on the 22nd of Adar.

Any and all comments and suggestions are welcome and can be addressed to:
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