



פרשת חיי שרה  
מרחשון תשע"ו  
שנת הקהל

### Shabbos Project

In connection to the Shabbos Project, Kollel ran a series of successful shiurim and programs.

Rabbi Johnson delivered a series of practical Hilchos Shabbos shiurim for ladies. The shiurim were well attended and involved Q&A and lively discussion.

Rabbi Stern gave a fascinating shiur on the laws of Amira L'nochri as they apply to asking a non-Jew to turn an air conditioner on or off on Shabbos.

A men's Chassidus shiur explored the inner meaning of the phrases of Shabbos through Maamarim of the Alter Rebbe, Tzemach Tzedek and Rebbe Rashab.

Kollel also published two brochures which were distributed as part of the Great Challah Bake.

Rabbi and Mrs Levi Gourarie prepared a brochure on the halachos and meaning of Shabbos candles and Rabbi Johnson wrote a similar publication on Hafrashas Challah.

### Public Holiday Learning

Each public holiday, the Kollel hosts a breakfast and learning program, so that men can enjoy a shiur on their day off.

On Cup Day, 30 men came to hear Rabbi Jacks' shiur on the halachos of unfair competition in relation to Uber.

The breakfast was sponsored by Mr Yossi Klein in honour of his mother's Yartzheit.

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem

אין בית המדרש בלא  
**Chiddush**



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## Accounting for our Time

Imagine you were given \$86,000 each day, deposited into your bank account. This money could be spent at your discretion, but with one proviso - there is no roll-over. Whatever is not spent, is lost.

Each day we are given 86,400 seconds, 24 hours to use as we choose. The time we don't use out to the fullest is lost and can never be returned.

On their death-bed, No one looks back and says "I wish I had made more money". Often our biggest regret is lost time and what more we could have accomplished in life. The irony is that we get so caught up in "things" and "stuff" that our most precious gift is under-utilised or wasted.

Rabbi Shlomo Ibn Gabirol encapsulates this in a powerful idiom;

אדם דואג על איבוד דמיו ואינו דואג על איבוד ימיו, דמיו אדם דואג על איבוד דמיו ואינו דואג על איבוד חוזרים. *Man worries about the waste of his money, but does not worry about the waste of his years, (but ultimately) his money does not help and his years do not return.*

Life is filled with distractions, which in the technological era have only become more exacerbated. A recent study in the USA estimated that the cost of lost productivity due to employee use of social media totalled over \$650 billion per year!

It may take just one minute to look at an SMS, twitter or Facebook post, but the minutes add up. If you multiply this across the year and across the entire workforce, the collective impact is staggering. After the interruption, it takes up to 20 minutes to properly refocus on the task at hand.

This is the financial cost. But imagine the human cost. What could have been accomplished in this lost time? And the distractions don't just invade our workspace, they also impact our relationships and other important areas or our lives.

In this week's Parsha we read how Avraham was advancing in years. The phrase used, בא בימים, literally means coming with days. The commentaries note that Avraham came with his days and

was able to account for the accomplishments of each day. Every moment was lived with meaning and purpose and utilised to the fullest in the service of his Creator.

Late one night, the Rebbe entered the Friedrike Rebbe's study in Leningrad. The Friedrike Rebbe had just finished taking Yechidus and would be leaving in an hour and a half to catch a train for an important meeting in Moscow. Yet he calmly sat organising papers as if nothing else was happening.

Observing this, the Rebbe could not contain his surprise and asked his father-in-law, "I know that Chabad Chassidism is based on the principle that "the mind rules the heart", but to such an extent?"

The Friedrike Rebbe replied, "we cannot make our days longer and nor can we add additional hours to our nights. But we can maximize how we use our time, by regarding each segment of time as a world of its own. When we devote a portion of time, whether it is an hour, a day or a minute, to a certain task, we should be totally invested in what we are doing as if nothing else exists in the world."

If it's the time allotted to Davening or a shiur, or when involved in a conversation with our spouse, child or friend, focus, block out the distractions and be present in what's most meaningful at the time.

Amongst Chassidim, it was common practise to make a *Cheshbon Nefesh*, an accounting of the day, each night when reciting the bedtime Shema.

What did I achieve today? How did I grow today? What good deeds did I do today? How did I help others today? And most importantly how can tomorrow be better than today?

We may not be able to account for every second or every minute. We might not be able to avoid or shake free of distractions. But the lesson of Avraham Avinu and the story of the Friedrike Rebbe is still relevant. If we want to be more productive, live with purpose and make our days count, be present and live in the moment.

# Stamped Books, Scrabble and Puzzles on Shabbos

Rabbi Yonason Johnson



Since it is not lasting, this is not considered to be writing or erasing. This is also the basis for the ruling of the Magein Avraham<sup>8</sup>.

The Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch<sup>9</sup> rules that opening and closing these books is permitted. His ruling is based on the rationale of the Ram"o and Ta"z of being מחוסר קריבה .

Two of the Melachos of Shabbos are; *Kosaiv* (writing) and *Mochaik* (erasing). In constructing the Mishkan, letters were written on adjacent beams so that they could be matched. If a letter was written mistakenly or incorrectly, it would need to be erased in order to write it correctly<sup>1</sup>.

## Stamped Page Edges

When books have stamps or writing along the side edges of the pages (as depicted above), may they be opened and closed on Shabbos? When the book is opened the letters are broken up. Does this constitute erasing? Similarly is closing the book considered writing?

This question applies not only to writing on the edges of the book but to pictures as well<sup>2</sup>. Blotches or patterns are not of concern.

The Mordechai Yaffe, known as the Levush<sup>3</sup>, rules that one may not open or close such books on Shabbos. One who does so may even be violating Shabbos on a Biblical level, since it is inevitable that the writing will be broken or completed through opening and closing<sup>4</sup>.

Many Acharonim dispute the Levush's ruling.

The Ramo<sup>5</sup> suggests multiple reasons to be lenient. His primary reason is that the letters are essentially written already. When the book is opened, the letters are just מחוסר קריבה –lacking being brought together. They are therefore theoretically viewed as remaining together and therefore nothing is being written or erased. This is also the basis for the lenient ruling of the Ta"z<sup>6</sup>.

The Perisha<sup>7</sup> likens the opening and closing of a book to the opening and closing of a door. Since the door is made to be opened and closed, it is not considered building or destroying the wall as it is closed or opened respectively. Likewise, the pages of a book are made to be opened and closed regularly.

The Mishna Berura<sup>10</sup> however is concerned for the stringent view of the Levush and rules that *Lechatchilah* such books may not be used. If no other Seforim are available and it will lead to *Bittul Torah*, one may rely on the lenient opinion.

The Avnei Nezer<sup>11</sup> is also stringent and distinguishes between placing fully formed letters next to one another which is permissible, and the opening and closing of the book which is effectively "forming" the letters and therefore forbidden.

This argument has further application in many practical Halacha scenarios.

## Torn Pages

Sometimes a Siddur or Sefer will have a ripped page. Is one allowed to push the sides of the page together to be able to decipher the words?

According to the opinion of the Ta"z and Alter Rebbe this is also just מחוסר קריבה and therefore permissible<sup>12</sup>. According to the Mishna Berura one should not do so<sup>13</sup>.

## Paroches with Writing

A Paroches which opens in the middle and has writing which becomes separated by opening, is also subject to the Machlokes above.

According to the Alter Rebbe, Ta"z and Magein Avraham, the Paroches may be opened, since the letters are only מחוסר קריבה.

## Scrabble

According to the view of the Mishna Berura, one may not play scrabble on Shabbos since the forming of the words by placing the letter-pieces next to one another constitutes writing. Dismantling the words would be erasing.

However according to the Alter Rebbe (based on the Ta"z and Ram"o), since the letters are already written and one is merely placing them together, this does not constitute writing and is permitted. Since the letters are already formed,

the Avnei Nezer would concur. Note that some Poskim raise a separate concern that one may come to write down the score.

## Puzzles

Assembling or dismantling picture-puzzles on Shabbos would be subject to the same Machlokes. According to the Alter Rebbe, the picture is already formed but just lacking joining together and therefore permissible. According to the Mishna Berura, puzzles should be avoided, although one could be lenient for young children.

## A Fundamental Exception

The Alter Rebbe<sup>14</sup> rules that if one pins or hooks silver letters onto a garment, it is considered writing. At first glance, this seems to contradict the cases above where the letters were already formed but were just lacking קריבה and therefore permissible. So why is it problematic?

The difference must be, that when the letters become firmly attached in place, it remains forbidden<sup>15</sup>.

Therefore, travel scrabble boards which have a grid (or is magnetic) to hold the letters in place should not be used. Similarly if the puzzle base has an inset border which holds the pieces together, or if the puzzle pieces interlock even semi-firmly, they should not be used even according to the lenient opinion of the Alter Rebbe. ■

<sup>1</sup> Shabbos 73b

<sup>2</sup> Magein Avraham and Ketzos Hashulchan.

<sup>3</sup> O.C. 340:4

<sup>4</sup> Ta"z 340:2 challenges that the Melacha is unintended (אינו מתכוין) and should not be Biblical prohibition. See however Avnei Nezer that the Melacha is inevitable (פסיק רישא) and therefore Biblically forbidden. The Levush follows the position of the Rambam that a מלאכה לגופה שאינה צריכה לגופה is Biblically forbidden.

<sup>5</sup> Teshuvos Simon 119

<sup>6</sup> O.C. 340:2

<sup>7</sup> Beginning of O.C. Simon 340

<sup>8</sup> O.C. 340:6

<sup>9</sup> O.C. 340:4. This is also the view of the Elya Rabbah, Chok Yaakov and Tosefos Shabbos.

<sup>10</sup> O.C. 340:17

<sup>11</sup> Simon 210

<sup>12</sup> In this case, the Magein Avraham would also rule stringently, since unlike the stamp of the side of the books, the torn page is not made to be opened and closed like a door.

<sup>13</sup> According to the Avnei Nezer, since the letters themselves are being completed, this would be forbidden.

<sup>14</sup> O.C. 340:9

<sup>15</sup> See Magein Avraham O.C. 340:10 with Machatzis Hashekel. See also Igros Moshe O.C. 1:135