



Parshas Toldos 5768

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Amirah L'akum

In the previous shiur we learned that one may benefit from a light a gentile turned on (or any other *melacha* the gentile did) for his own benefit, and one may not benefit from a light a gentile turned on (or any other *melacha* the gentile did) for a Jew's benefit. The latter is true even if the gentile is paid for each individual light and even when the gentile turned on the light without being told to do so.

Chazal were concerned that if one was to benefit from the light turned on by a gentile, one would instruct him to turn on a light.

What if he switched it on for both of us?

When the non-Jew turns on the light for both a Jew and for another non-Jew, the Jew **may not** benefit from the light. ¹ However, when the non-Jew who turned on the light is in the picture, i.e. he did it for himself, if we know that he had the Jew in mind as well, it is a dispute between the *Magen Avraham* and the *Chayei Adam* whether the Jew may benefit from the light. ² In such a case a *Rav* should be consulted.

If I instruct a non-Jew to wash the dishes and he turns on the lights, may I benefit from that light?

The *Taz* ³ says that in such a case it is considered as if the non-Jew turned on the lights for his own sake and not for mine, even though he is washing my dishes; and I may duly benefit from the light.

This *halacha* is tricky, because if I ask a non-Jew ⁴ to accompany me in order to get something from my dark storeroom, and he turns on the light, it is considered as if he turned it on for me even though he is coming with me, and I may not benefit from this light.

However, if I instruct him to go to the storeroom for something and he turns on the light, I may benefit from that light. ⁵

The difference is that in the former case the non-Jew is accompanying **me** and the light he turns on is for me, but in the latter case he is turning it on so that **he** can see where **he** is going, even though ultimately he is going for me.

May one ask a non-Jew to turn on the heating?

We find that *Chazal* were very concerned with regards to children's welfare. Since cold weather can be detrimental to their health, *Chazal* permitted a non-Jew to turn on the heating on Shabbos in cold countries. ⁶ Accordingly, there is no problem to have a non-Jew turn on the central heating (when it was not preset with a time switch), because children require heat to remain healthy.

In certain cold conditions, *Chazal* even permitted a non-Jew to turn the heating on for the benefit

¹ *Simon* 276:2. *M"b* 16 says that the reason is either because it was **also** lit for a Jew, or because **maybe** he had the Jew in mind.

² *M"b* *Simon* 276:17 and the *Bi'ur Halacha*.

³ *Simon* 276:5

⁴ *Simon* 276:3

⁵ *M"b* *simon* 276:27.

⁶ *Simon* 276:5

of adults, because, as *Chazal* say: 'everyone is considered sick when it concerns cold weather' and without heating even adults could become ill, and one may therefore instruct a non-Jew to turn on the heating.

Is there a difference between a bonfire and central heating?

As mentioned last week, one light caters for many, and therefore when a non-Jew turns a light on for himself, a Jew may benefit from it. However there is an opinion⁷ that a bonfire is different, because the more people warming themselves around a bonfire the more wood is needed to make it bigger, and therefore if a non-Jew makes a bonfire for himself one is forbidden to sit by it (according to this opinion) lest he adds wood for the sake of the Jew.

This, of course, does not apply to a central heating system. A central heating is similar to a light, and if a non-Jew turned it on for himself or for children, adults may benefit from it as well.

If a non-Jew turned on the heating when it was prohibited to do so, what is one supposed to do?

The *Rama*⁸ says that one does not have to leave the house if a non-Jew turned on a light or the heating, but nevertheless the Jew is forbidden to do anything he could not have done before.

That means that if he could not read beforehand, because of poor reading light, he may not read now.

He may not warm himself in front of the fire, yet he may remove his sweater he was wearing due to the cold, just as he may walk in his house at a quicker pace than he could have, before the non-Jew turned on the light.⁹

How would this apply to a building with a central heating system where both Jews and non-Jews are resident?

In extremely cold weather, or when children dwell in the flat, there is no problem whatsoever. If the majority of the residents are non-Jews, we say that the non-Jew has intention for the majority, and is permitted. Even when the majority are Jews, the *Mishna Berura*¹⁰ says that one is permitted to hire a non-Jew for the entire winter season to turn on the heating when it is cold, and if he turns it on when it is not so cold, it is considered as if he did it on his own accord, and as mentioned above, one does not have to leave the apartment.

Vort on the Parsha

For saying "I am but soil and dust", *Am Yisrael* merited the *mitzvos* of water of the *Sotah* and *Parah Aduma*. The difference between soil and ash is that soil has no past but contains a future – it's a growing agent, and ash has a past but no future.

The water of the *sotah*, into which soil from the *Beis Hamikdash* is added, has powers to cleanse the past and vindicate a *sotah*, and ash added to the purification waters has the power to purify impure people and give them a future. *Beis Haleivni*.

It was Avraham's humility that gave power to such simple objects that would now bring so much joy to his offspring.

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לזכר נשמת חנה בת ברוך

⁷ *Simon* 276:1

⁸ *Ibid*. If the Jew instructed the non-Jew to turn on the heating when he was forbidden to do so, the *M"b* 13 says that the Jew would have to leave his house.

⁹ Simple.

¹⁰ *Simon* 276:45

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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.