SHABBAT UNPACKED

OLAMI MENTORSHIP

Session 12

CREATION THROUGH HOTZAAH/TRANSPORTING OR CARRYING (Category 11 of 39)

BURST OF INSPIRATION:

At the start of Shabbat, we light two separate candles. But when Shabbat ends with Havdalah, we use a single flame made from at least two intertwined wicks.

This contrast is deeply symbolic. As Shabbat begins, we may feel scattered – pulled by the pressures of the week, disconnected from loved ones, and distant from Hashem. The two separate candles reflect this sense of separation.

But Shabbat offers us a sacred pause – a chance to reconnect. We spend meaningful time with family, strengthen friendships, and draw closer to Torah and Hashem. By the time Shabbat ends, we've bridged the gaps. The intertwined wicks of Havdalah symbolize our renewed sense of unity – within ourselves, with those around us, and with our Creator.

Shabbat is a gift of reconnection. Use it to come home – to your family, your community, and your soul. In that unity, you'll find the peace and elevation that only Shabbat can bring.

HOTZAAH/TRANSPORTING OR CARRYING (CATEGORY 11 OF 39):

When the Mishkan was moved, its boards were loaded onto large wagons and transported through the wilderness—a public domain (r'shus harabim). The wagons themselves were private domains (r'shus hayachid). Moving items between public and private domains—or through a public domain—is the creative category of hotzaah (carrying), which is prohibited on Shabbat.

How does the Torah define public and private domains?

A **public domain** encompasses a highway, city street, or square. These streets must be at least 30 feet wide and frequently used by a large number of people. Some decisors of Jewish law hold that a thoroughfare is not considered public unless at least 600,000 people use it. Additionally, the streets must not be roofed or walled and must pass through the city entirely.

A **private domain** is a rectangular area measuring 12 in by 12 in, demarcated by walls at least 30 inches high.

The Rabbis extended the prohibition of transporting even when someone is not specifically moving something from a private or public domain as defined above. For example, carrying from one's home to a street would be prohibited, even if the street is smaller than 30 feet wide.

HOTZAAH/TRANSPORTING OR CARRYING ON SHABBAT (CATEGORY 11 OF 39):

Practical applications of Hotzaah

1. Based on the prohibition of hotzaah, one may not carry or transfer any items from their home to their yard, to the hallway of their apartment building, to the street, to another building or to another home.

   Examples:
   - One cannot carry a person or objects in their hands or their pockets when leaving home i.e. your baby, your keys, your pocketbook.
   - One may not throw a ball out of a window into the backyard.
   - One may not carry a talit or siddur (prayer book) from home to synagogue.

2. One may not pick up an object that is outside and carry it to another outside point.

   Examples:
   - One would not be allowed to throw a ball in the park.
   - It would be prohibited to push a stroller down the road.

   Although it is prohibited to carry or move items, it is permitted to:

   - Wear clothing and jewelry.
   - Wear eye glasses needed for vision. One may not wear reading glasses or sunglasses as they are often removed when not needed.
   - Wear bandages or casts.
   - Use crutches or a cane if one needs them for walking.

HOTZAAH/TRANSPORTING OR CARRYING ON SHABBAT (CATEGORY 11 OF 39):

“But wait... I have seen people carrying on Shabbat. How?”

Many communities and neighborhoods construct something called an “eruv”. An eruv is a halachic (Jewish legal) boundary that combines multiple private and public areas into one shared private domain, which makes carrying within that area permissible.

An eruv essentially creates a halachic enclosure, using neighborhood boundaries (like fences or walls) and physical markers (like wires or strings stretched over poles) to form a halachic perimeter around a neighborhood. Most modern eruvin are made with thin wire (often fishing line or similar) strung between telephone and street poles. By demarcating the areas of the neighborhood, one can comfortably carry within those boundaries.

HOTZAAH/TRANSPORTING OR CARRYING ON SHABBAT (CATEGORY 11 OF 39):

How does the eruv affect Jewish life?

- Often, it is the eruv that defines the boundaries of a neighborhood as families look to purchase homes within the eruv.
- Each community has an eruv map that is available online or through the town's synagogues.
- Each week, a member of the community checks the eruv to ensure all the strings and poles are in place. If anything is damaged or down (due to storms, animals, etc.) it is critical to repair before Shabbat so community members may carry.
- In an area where there is no eruv or the eruv is down, simply check your pockets before going out! You may find tissues, keys, or other items you didn't even realize you were carrying.

Please note: We have provided the above general categories. There are many additional details and exceptions within these categories. For practical inquiries, please contact your LOR (local Olami rabbi).

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