

Shoel U'Mashiv

Paper Airplanes on Shabbos: Does it fly?

Rabbi Noah Whittenburg

Q - "My child is entering middle school and his new hobby is paper airplanes. Is he allowed to make them on *Shabbos*?"

A - What are the factors that must be considered?

This is really a question of the *Melacha* of *Boneh* (building). The *Rambam Hilchos Shabbos* 11:13 says that assembling pieces is a problem of *Boneh*. The *Mishnah Berurah* 313:41 says that attaching something very tightly in a way that is difficult to undo is either *Makah B'Patish* (completing a vessel) or *Boneh*. In 313:2 he says that something which is normally assembled and disassembled is permitted to do so on *Shabbos*. Therefore, the *Shemiras Shabbos K'Hilchasa* 24:6 says one can add or remove a leaf from a table since that is the way it is normally used. In 16:19 he says not to stop a child from playing with Mega Bloks on *Shabbos*, but Legos should be avoided since they lock together tightly. Also, any other toy with a screwing or locking mechanism should be avoided.

Where do paper airplanes fit into the discussion?

The *Shemiras Shabbos K'Hilchasa* 16:21 says not to create a toy by folding paper (a hat, a boat, an airplane, etc.). He says that it is a problem of making a *Kli* (a vessel). In footnote 61 he says that he heard from Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l that folding paper to make a toy is not similar to Mega Bloks since there they are assembled with the intention to disassemble them, so it is not real *Boneh*. The paper, however, is folded with the intention to leave it as such, which is *Boneh*.

What should they do?

I told them based on the *Shemiras Shabbos K'Hilchasa* that the child shouldn't make paper airplanes on *Shabbos*. However, I told them that there is no issue with the child playing with paper airplanes on *Shabbos* that were made before *Shabbos*. The discussion is only about taking the paper and making a toy out of it but using a toy that was already made from paper is permitted.