Shoel U'Mashiv

Solar Watch on Shabbos?
Rabbi Noah Whittenburg

Q - "I was thinking about getting a new watch. What's the deal with solar watches on *Shabbos*? Can you wear them?"

A - What is the possible problem?

A solar watch is made in a way that behind the face is a solar panel. That way the clock doesn't need its battery replaced or to be wound, but rather it will re-energize every time it is put in the sun. The question is what type of action this is? Is it a *Psik Reisha* since bringing the watch outside will definitely lead to recharging the battery (the *Issur* of using electricity on *Shabbos*)? Is it a *Dvar Sh'Eino Mis'Kavein* (unintentional) since the sun just happens to hit it and charge it without any intention? Or is it *Mis'Aseik* since the watch is simply being worn to tell time without any intention of recharging it?

Which applies to the watch?

The *Peninei Halacha* 17:17 brings two opinions about solar watches on *Shabbos*–one opinion that is *Mekil* and the other that is *Machmir*. The *Machmir* opinion says that it is some type of *Psik Reisha* since it is impossible to wear the watch out on *Shabbos* without sun hitting it and the watch charging. The *Mekil* opinion says that since the watch does not need to be recharged every day, rather it can go a few days on a charge and any minute amount of charge is insignificant. So since one has zero intention to charge it, they are only wearing it for the time function, it is *Mis'Aseik*.

Can one wear a solar watch on *Shabbos*?

The *Peninei Halacha* concludes by saying that if one wants to be *Mekil*, it is appropriate and if one wants to be *Machmir*, then *TaVo Alov Bracha*–they should be blessed. Therefore, it seems appropriate to refrain from buying such a watch if one's intention is to wear it on *Shabbos*. But if one owns such a watch or is gifted one or simply chooses to wear one, then they have good bases for doing so on *Shabbos*. Obviously if the watch has stopped functioning and wearing it will recharge it, doing so should be avoided in every instance.