

We thank Manny Saltiel, anshe.org and revach.net for the content

Rav Yaakov Krantz, the “Dubnow Maggid” (1741-1804). *Yahrzeit date: 17th of Teves (this year: Friday, December 20th)*

Rav Yaakov was born in a province of Vilna. He was very learned at an early age. By the age of 20, he became the darshan of his city. He taught in cities around Lublin, Poland. Later in his life he settled in Dubnow. His reputation as a maggid spread, connecting him with Gedolim of that time, including the Vilna Gaon. The majority of his works are using stories and parables to transmit deeper ethical and moral teachings. One of his famous published works is Ohel Yaakov on the Chumash.

The following is one of his parables regarding Shemita and Yovel. There was once a beggar, who had good mazal and managed to find job earning small pay. He bragged to the other townspeople how wealthy he was. His neighbor said to him: ‘All the years when you were a beggar you counted your money in pennies. Even now that you earn a meager living, you are still counting your wealth in pennies and are proud of your thousands upon thousands of pennies. However, if you count your money in the larger denominations that normal people use, you have but a few gold coins which does not make you rich.

The same is true in our lives. We are here today and gone tomorrow. Mistakenly, we measure our life in years, days and hours, and we think we have been here forever and will continue to be here for a very long time. Not so says the Torah. Count Shemittah and Yovel. You will see from seven years you have one Shemittah. You will only be here for a few Shemittot, and probably not even two Yovlot. Think of it that way and you will be less concerned with your temporary dwelling and more concerned with your permanent one. Then, instead of collecting trivial events which are worth mere pennies, you will instead focus on collecting “gold coins” for mitzvos. Where each one is worth not a Shemittah or a Yovel, but an eternity ♦



Halacha Challenge

Eating a Pomegranate

by Shlomo Epshteyn



Mr. Jacobson enjoyed eating a pomegranate for dessert at the Friday night seuda. Now, his hands are sticky with pomegranate juice. He was about to wipe his hands on his cloth napkin when his brother said, “Wait! Are you sure you’re allowed to do that?”

Questions

What is a possible Shabbos transgression that could occur if Mr. Jacobson wipes the juice on the cloth napkin? What is the best solution in this situation?

Answer

The issue here is the *melacha* of *Tzoveya* (dyeing). *Tzoveya* is an *av melacha*, as it was required to dye the wool covers of the Mishkan. The Beis Yosef¹ cites Sefer Yereim which says that after eating strawberries or similar fruits, one should be careful not to touch his clothing or a tablecloth with juice-stained fingers. The concern is that one will apply the fruit juice to the cloth, thereby performing a *toladah* of *tzoveya*. The Darchei Moshe², however, cites the opinion of the Agur who holds that this action is not considered to be *tzoveya* (even *m’derabbanan*) because it is *derech lichluch* (the cloth gets soiled more than it gets improved).

The Shulchan Aruch³ brings the opinion of the Sefer Yireim, yet the Rama (the author of the Darchei Moshe) does not cite the Agur. As such, we see

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that even the Rama holds stringently regarding this halacha. It is not clear how Magen Avrohom⁴ rules. He does quote the Radvaz who holds that being careful not to touch one's clothing or a tablecloth with juice-stained fingers is a *chumra yeseira* (extra stringency – i.e., one is not required to be stringent in this).

Both the Mishna Berura⁵ and the Aruch HaShulchan⁶ rule stringently. The Mishna Berura, however, does allow us to rely on the lenient opinions (the Agur & Radvaz) when a person has no other way to clean his hands.

There is a controversy among contemporary authorities whether the *melacha* of *tzoveya* applies to disposable items (e.g., a paper napkin). Rav Neuwirth zt"l in Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchosa rules leniently on the matter⁷. However, the *sefer* Chut Shoni⁸ (a collection of *shiraim* from HaRav Nissim Karelitz *shlit"a*) states that since a disposable item does not deteriorate on its own, *melacha* of *tzoveya* does in fact apply to it.

Based on this discourse*, the best solution for Mr. Jacobson is to clean his hands with water. He should not use a cloth napkin to wipe the juice from his hands, unless he is in a difficult situation (e.g., no water is available). He should find out from his Rav if it's ok to use a paper napkin in this case (due to the fact that there is a dispute among the contemporary poskim on this issue; see above) ♦

*Note: Since this is just a discourse in *halacha* and not *p'sak* halacha, one should ask his Rav on how to conduct himself if such a case should arise.

1. ב"י א"ח סימן שכ שם 2. שו"ע סימן שכ סעיף כ 3. מ"ב סימן שכ ס"ק כד 4. שם 5. חוט
6. עה"ש סימן שכ אות ז 7. ששכ"ה פרק יד סעיף כא (במהדורה חדשה) 8. חוט
- שני פרק י"ט אות ב

Kids Ask, Zeidy Answers



"Zaidy, why do we whisper 'Baruch shem kevod...' in Shema?"

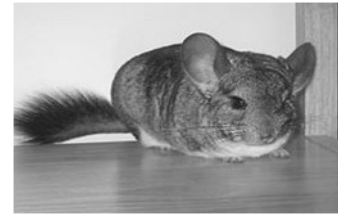


"The answer is hidden in this week's parsha, Kinderlach! When Yaakov Avinu was ready to depart from this world, his sons declared their *emuna* by saying in front of their father, '*Shema Yisroel Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echod*'. Overjoyed with *nachas* of seeing all 12 of his children go on the derech of Torah, he blessed Hashem by saying, '*Baruch shem kevod malchuso le'olam voed*'. The Medrash* says that he said that phrase whispering. [*Devarim Raba 2:35]

Wonders of Creation

The Chinchilla

by Alex Isaacson



The Chinchilla (whose name literally means "little chincha") is named after the Chincha people of the Andes who once wore its dense, velvet-like fur. Chinchillas are gray rodents, slightly larger and more robust than ground squirrels. They are native to the Andes Mountains in South America where they live in social colonies called "herds".

Chinchillas live inside crevices of rocky terrain at high altitudes of up to 14,000 ft. They are impressive jumpers, able to leap as much as 6 feet in order to navigate their rocky environment. They are also uniquely equipped with thick coats of fur to handle the cold weather of the Andes. They never bathe in water, because the dense fur actually prevents air-drying. Instead, they instinctively clean their fur by taking dust baths to absorb oil and dirt. Since it's usually cool where they live, chinchillas lack the ability to sweat. If temperatures rise above 80°F, they overheat and may suffer from heat stroke. To avoid this, they dissipate heat by routing blood to their large ears, thus red ears signal "overheating."

The Chinchilla is often used in researching the human auditory system, because the chinchilla's range of hearing and cochlear size are very similar to our own. The cochlea is a spiral hearing organ that contains tiny hair cells whose movement is interpreted by the brain as sound. It is fairly easy to access in the chinchilla, making it an especially convenient creature for research ♦

Solve a Riddle

Riddle

On Chanuka we have heard plenty about the Greeks. But how do the Greeks, or more specifically a part of their culture, play a role in Halachos of Purim?



Answer to last issue's riddle:

(Riddle: Zundel is in the following situation: There is an item that is being sold. Even though neither Zundel nor anyone that he knows needs that item, he is obligated to buy it. What's the situation?)

Zundel is in a situation where a non-Jew is selling a Mezuzah* at a normal price. Zundel is obligated to buy the Mezuzah, to prevent a non-Jew from mistreating the Mezuzah. See Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 28:11

*The same would be true if a non-Jew was selling a Sefer Torah or Tefillin.