

The Iron Necklace

Special thanks for the content to the Jewish Community of Hebron organization

At the time when Jews had full control of the Cave of Machpelah, the *shamash* was in charge of the keys to the gate. His name was Yitzhak and he was a poor widower. He had one daughter named Dina, a kind hearted and beautiful girl. The time came when Dina reached marriageable age and was betrothed to a fine young man.

Yitzhak worked hard to save money for his daughter's wedding needs. Yitzhak remembered that the tradition of the Chevron community was to provide for a bride a gold necklace to wear at her wedding. However, he did not have enough money to buy one for Dina. Yitzhak became very sad. This adornment was a great matter of pride among the women of the community.

As the wedding day approached, one night Dina had a dream that she was standing at the gate of the Cave of Machpelah. There she was, holding her father's chain with the keys to the gate. A woman dressed in white came up to her. The woman had a face filled with light like the sun. She said to Dina, "This big chain with these keys to this holy place should be your necklace at your wedding. This necklace is more precious than any necklace of gold and jewels." Then, the woman disappeared. Dina awoke and remembering her dream, she decided not to tell anyone about it.

The wedding day finally came and Yitzhak's face was grey with dread about what would be. Dina's friends came to help her get ready for the wedding. After Dina dressed in her wedding dress, she asked her father if she could have a word with him alone. With a broad smile on her face, she said, "Father, please give me the keys to the Cave of Machpelah. They will be my wedding necklace. They have much more merit than any gold or jewels." Yitzhak was surprised and relieved. He ran to fetch the keys and gave them to his daughter. Wearing the iron chain with the keys of the Cave of Machpelah, Dina's face and neck radiated with a Heavenly shine. People exclaimed she was more beautiful with the necklace of iron than brides of the past with gold and jewels.

From that day, Chevron's brides wore this special "necklace of iron" instead of gold and jewels at their wedding. ♦



Halacha Challenge

Shopping for a Havdala Candle

by Shlomo Epshteyn

reviewed by Rav Chaim Malinowitz



During their vacation, the Zinger family visited Tzfat. They enjoyed walking around its mysterious streets and looking at interesting art displayed at the store fronts. "Look, a candle store!" said Chani, pointing to a little store with about 100 different candles in the window. "Perfect!" said Mrs. Zinger, "we need to buy a new Havdala candle." In the store, they found two candles that everyone liked. One was a big multi-colored, intertwined eight-wick wax candle and the other one was an oil candle that had a pretty glass base and a holder for 5 wicks on top. In both the wax and the oil candles, the wicks were standing separate from each other, but were close enough for the flames of the wicks to join together.

Question: Should the Zinger family buy the wax candle or the oil one?

Answer: They should buy the wax candle.

Explanation

In the last week's article we learned that it's a *mitzva min hamuvchar* to use an *avuka* (lit. a torch) for Havdala. The reason for this is follows. When an *avuka* is lit, it is easy to distinguish the multiple lights that exist in the fire. It is important for the multiple lights to be noticeable, because when we make the *bracha* of *borei m'orei ha'eish*—in which the word *m'orei* (i.e., lights) is in plural form—we give praise to Hashem for the multiple lights that He creates in a fire. Let's recall, to be considered as an *avuka*, the candle needs to have at least two wicks that are at a distance from each other (e.g., separated by wax), but whose flames join together when lit.



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Halacha Challenge

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When it comes to picking the type of candle to use for the *mitzva* of Ner Shabbos on Friday night, an oil candle is preferred over a wax candle¹. By Ner Shabbos, two factors are important: (1) the candle should burn consistently (i.e., the flame should not be 'jumping' or fluctuating in its intensity)², and (2) the produced light should be clear³.

The Shulchan Aruch⁴ rules that it's a *mitzva min hamuvchar* to use olive oil for Ner Shabbos, since the olive oil is drawn consistently by the wick⁵. The Magen Avrohom⁶ writes that if olive oil is not available, it is a *mitzva* to use another oil (which produces clear light)³, and it's better than using a wax candle.

Interestingly, for Havdala, it's the other way around: when possible, one should use a wax candle⁷. The *poskim* bring that the reason for this is based on Kabbala (see Aruch Hashulchan (298:5), which brings two Kabbalistic explanations from the Pri Eitz Chaim)⁸. In addition to this reason, the Aruch Hashulchan writes that it has become the *minhag* in Klal Yisroel to use a wax candle for Havdala⁹. The Aruch Hashulchan rules that one should not deviate from this *minhag*.

Hence, when shopping for a Havdala candle, one should buy specifically a wax candle. Also, it's important to point out that when a person does not have a Havdala candle, if possible, he should use two wax candles, as opposed to using two non-wax candles (e.g., the small, white candles made from paraffin which are made to go inside glass holders.) ♦

1. שו"ע א"ח סימן רסד סעיף ו ומג"א שם ס"ק יב 2. שבת כא. מימרא דרבה, רש"י שם ד"ה מסכסכת 3.
מ"ב סימן רסד ס"ק כג 4. שו"ע שם 5. תס' שבת כג. ד"ה מר'ש 6. מג"א סי' רסד ס"ק יב 7. מג"א סימן
רחצ ס"ק ג, ערוה"ש סימן רחצ אות ה ואות ו, מ"ב סימן רצח ס"ק ה 8. מג"א שם, ערוה"ש שם 9. ערוה"ש
סימן אות ו

Kids Ask, Zeidy Answers



Zeidy,
why don't
we make a
bracha
when we
get an enjoyment from
fire - for example, when
we get warmed up sitting
by the fireplace?



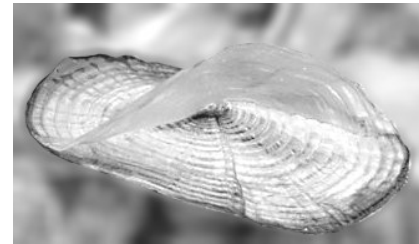
Great question, kids. The Ramban* explains that blessings for enjoyment are said only on those things that enter inside our bodies, like food, drinks and aromas. Since the heat of a fire is on the outside of our bodies, we don't make a *bracha* when enjoying its warmth.

* Chidushei HaRamban on Shas, Brachos 52b

Wonders of Creation

Velella

By Alex Isaacson



Velella is a cosmopolitan genus of free-floating hydrozoans (creatures that are related to jellyfish) that live on the surface of the open ocean. Also known as "sea raft" or "little sail", each apparent Velella is in fact a hydroid colony, and most are less than about 3 inches long. They are usually deep blue in color, but their most obvious feature

is a small stiff sail on top. Hashem gave these creatures this sail in order for the wind to propel them over the surface of the waters.

Like similar species, Velella are carnivorous. They catch their prey, generally plankton, by means of tentacles that hang down in the water. For self protection, Hashem supplied them with cnidocysts. A cnidocyst is an explosive cell, which contains the toxins against intruders. For such a tiny mysterious creature, they are also a formidable opponent. ♦



Riddles

Riddle



Answer to last issue's riddle:

(Riddle: Two look for one, but one does not look for two. Yet, two don't stop for one, but one does stop for two. Which mitzva is this referring to?)

ANSWER: Zimun.

Two men who ate together have a *mitzva* to look for the third man to join the *zimun*. One man who ate by himself, does not need to look for two people to join him. [O.C. 193:1, M.B. ibid., 8]

If three men ate together, and one of them wants to *bench*, he can't make the other two men stop eating in order to answer his *zimun* bracha. But if two people want to *bench*, the third man needs to stop eating and answer their *zimun*. [O.C. 200:1]

Aside from Chanuka and Chol HaMoed, when is the Torah read 5 days in a row?

Hint: It's coming up soon...