

Stories, Biographies & Wonders

Proboscis Monkey

by Alex Isaacson

The Proboscis Monkey is a reddish-brown Old World monkey that is endemic to the southeast Asian island of Borneo and is easily identifiable because of its unusually large nose that extends up to 4 inches in length! Both males and females have bulging stomachs that give the monkeys what resembles a pot belly and many of the monkeys' toes are webbed. They are known to make various vocalizations when communicating the status of group, males will emit honks. They have a special honk emitted towards infants, which is also used for reassurance. Males will also produce alarm calls to signal danger. This amazing creature is also perhaps the most aquatic of the primates and is a good swimmer, capable of swimming up to an astonishing 66ft underwater and is known to swim across rivers and jump off branches descending into water. Proboscis survives mainly on a diet of leaves, seeds, and unripe fruits but will occasionally consume insects as well. They have complex, chambered stomachs that rely on a host of symbiotic bacteria for digestion. Foods that are poisonous or inedible to most animals, this monkey can eat.



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◆ requires *geniza* ◆

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

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Halacha Challenge

Shaking Out a Tablecloth in Front of Birds



On a Shabbos afternoon, the Appland family hosted a Tehillim group in their home for the neighborhood children. It was a beautiful Spring day, so they set up a table on their porch. On the table, next to each chair there was a sefer of Tehillim and a plate with a cupcake that Mrs. Appland baked on *erev* Shabbos for the kids of the Tehillim group in honor of Shaina's birthday.

After the children finished saying Tehillim, Rafi collected the books and brought them into the house.

Kids truly enjoyed eating their cupcakes. After they were done, the tablecloth was full of crumbs. Yona took the end of the tablecloth and was about to shake out the crumbs on the floor of the porch.

"Wait, Yona!" said his older sister, Rina. "Look! Our porch has many birds who can't wait to eat up these crumbs. If we shake out the tablecloth here, we will, for sure, end up feeding the birds! And you know - we are not allowed feed strange animals on Shabbos."

Q. *Can the tablecloth be shaken out on the porch?*

DEDICATIONS

◆ by the **Myers family**, with gratitude to הקב"ה on the occasion of **Yehuda's Bar Mitzva**



Special thanks to kehillas **Beis Tefillah Yonah Avraham**

Help: Perhaps, the best *hakdama* to this article is the following short teaching of the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* [42:11] - “*One should be very careful with regards to [bread] crumbs not to throw them [in a trash], because [throwing them away] is 'difficult for poverty' (i.e., it can cause a person to become poor). Rather, one should gather them up together and give them to the birds.*”

Is Rina correct that there is a prohibition to feed strange animals? To some extent, she is right. More precisely, however, a person may not feed or give water to any animals—including his own—that don't depend on him for the food and drink. Animals that depend on the person to feed them (such as most pets and farm animals) can be fed on Shabbos. The source of this halacha is a Mishna in *masechet* Shabbos [24:3] :

...ואין נותנין מים לפני דבורים... אבל נותנין לפני אווזין ותרגולים...
And we don't put water in front of bees...But we may put in front of geese and chickens...

The Gemora [Shabbos 155b] explains that the mishna permitted to give water in front of animals such as geese and chickens since they depend on the person for their food and water. But the mishna prohibited putting water in front of bees—even if those bees are from his own bee hive—because the bees can get their water from the ponds. What is the reason for this prohibition? The answer is that feeding animals that don't depend on the person to provide food and drink for them is unnecessary labor. Hence, this falls under a general prohibition of “*Tircha*” -doing unnecessary or difficult labor on Shabbos [Mishna Berura 324 §29].

Menucha's Answer*: Yes—Yona can shake out the tablecloth on the porch and let the birds eat the crumbs. | **Explanation:** One may ask: true that Yona is not intending to feed the birds, but isn't it a case of *p'sik reisha* (i.e., by putting the crumbs on the floor of the porch, the birds will be certainly fed)? Even if that's so, it's nevertheless permitted to do. As we saw in the 'Help' section, the main reason for why we are not allowed to feed animals (who don't depend on us for food) is just another manifestation of the general prohibition of *Tircha*. Let's recall that one of the definitions of “*Tircha*” is doing “unnecessary labor”. Feeding animals who don't depend on us is “unnecessary labor.” Hence, feeding an animal can only pose an issue if we are doing it for the sake of the animal. What's happening in our case? Yona is not shaking out the crumbs for the sake of the birds, but rather for the sake of his family—to have a clean tablecloth. That is not called “unnecessary labor” and is therefore permitted. [Based on the teaching of Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchosa (New Edition) ch.27 §21]

* Note: Menucha's answer is for Torah learning purposes only and not as a *halachic* ruling. To know laws of Shabbos on a practical level, the reader is encouraged to study them in depth, find out the *minhagim* of his/her family and community, and consult with a *halachic* authority. (The opinions of the sources cited in the article may not necessary reflect rulings of other *halachic* authorities.)

Short & Sweet

Tehillim



ה' שִׁמְרָךְ ה' צִלְךָ עַל-יַד יְמִינֶךָ. -- תהילים קכא:

Hashem is your guardian; Hashem is your shade [of protection] at your right hand.

What is unique about the right hand of a person that it needs a special protection from Hashem?

The Alshich explains that inside the right hand is *the main sanctity of a Jewish person*.

If the right hand has significant *kedusha* in it, why does it need extra protection?

The Alshich explains that the desire of the *היצונים* (i.e., powers of impurity) is to cling to *kedusha*. As such, the *tumma* wants to be attached to the right hand of a person, since that's where the main *kedusha* of a person is found.

What do you think is the reason for the fact that עיקר קדושת איש הישראלי is in the right hand?

Riddles



After learning *parshas* Bechukosai in depth, Aaron exclaimed: “It pays off to be short!”

Why did Aaron say that?

The answer to the last issue's riddle

Riddle: Zevi is impure. He came to a place where he found two pools of water that looked like *mikvaos*. “Don't worry, the water in both of them is pure,” said a man with a long white beard who was sitting there. Zevi immersed in the 1st one. “Now you are pure,” said the man. Then, Zevi immersed in the 2nd one. “Now you are impure,” said the man. How come?

Answer: The 2nd pool had *Mayim Sheuvim* (for example: water drawn from a well). A person becomes impure if he immerses in *Mayim Sheuvim* after immersing himself in a kosher mikva.