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By the Hakham
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5782/2022 Parashath Aharei Moth

May One Use a Soft Brush on Shabbath?

Removing hair from one's body on Shabbath, comes under the forbidden Melakha (Sabbath labor) of Gozez (shearing). Since combing and brushing one's hair almost inevitably entails plucking some hairs, it is forbidden on Shabbath.

There is an opinion that using a soft brush is permitted. However, Maran Mordekhai Eliyahu, z"l, mentions that in truth, what really matters is how strong the hair is. One must know whether hairs get plucked or not. What one must do is practice brushing one's hair during the week and see if any hairs get pulled. If they do, then what type of brush was used is irrelevant and one is forbidden from using it.

One should note that this applies to the hair on one's head. The hair of a beard, however, is very different and can be plucked very easily. As such, one must be careful not to comb or brush one's beard on Shabbath.

(See Derekh HaTorah, 21:7)

5782 פֶּרַשַׁת אַחֲרֵי מוֹת

Aharei Moth: The Loss of the Righteous

"וַיִּדְבֹּר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה אַחֲרֵי מוֹת שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אַהֲרֹן" And G-d spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron.. Nadab and Abihu, the two sons of Aharon HaKohen, 'a"h, were very righteous, and their death was a great loss.

It says in the Gemara of Rosh Hashanah that the death of the righteous is likened to the burning of the House of G-d. Maran Mordekhai Eliyahu, 'a"h, comments in Dibrei Mordekhai, that in the Midrash it says that the death of the righteous is more difficult for G-d than the 98 Tokhaḥoth (admonitions) in Mishneh Torah (Debarim) and the destruction of the Temple. This appears to contradict that which is written in the Gemara.

He answers that it all depends on whether or not the Ṣaddiq (righteous individual) who passes away has continuity by leaving a large group of students who continue in his ways and Torah. If he does then his death is likened to the destruction of the Temple (which is still very bitter), but not more than that. If not, then it is even worse than the destruction of the Temple.

(See Dibrei Mordekhai, Parashath Aharei Moth)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

For the 'Ilui Neshamah of
Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h.
יעקב אליהו עבדאללה פרג' חיים בן רחל, ע"ה

Counting the 'Omer Before 'Arbith

The Maran Yosef Qaro, z"l, in the Shulḥan 'Arukh (Code of Jewish Law) comments that those who are meticulous count the 'Omer after it is certain night (which is after the emergence of three stars). He adds that this is the appropriate way to do it.

Once it has become certain night, one is permitted to count the 'Omer, even if one has not yet prayed 'Arbith. Nevertheless, counting before praying 'Arbith is not the ideal way of counting. The reason is that 'Arbith is constant whereas counting the 'Omer is not, and we follow the concept that that which is regular takes precedence over that which is not (תדיר ושאינו תדיר, תדיר קודם).

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh, 489:2. Kaf Haḥayyim, ibid, Oth 43)

Why Must a "Magician" Reveal His Tricks?

We are aware that when someone performs magic tricks, after he is done, he has to show the audience how the trick was carried out, so that they do not believe that it was actual magic. He shows them the trick or sleight of hand that was involved in creating the illusion or impression of magic. Why does he have to do this?

The Rambam writes that a sorcerer (witch), is put to death by stoning. This refers to one who performed an act of magic. However, one who pretends to do magic, but it wasn't really magic, is given lashes (Makkath Marduth). These admonitory lashes are given to one who violates Rabbinical law.

Today, those who perform magic tricks are not sorcerers or real magicians. It is merely trickery that deceives the onlooker's senses, like a trompe l'oeil. Nevertheless, one may still not let people believe that it is real magic. Therefore, if one shows people that it was merely a trick and demonstrates how it was done, it is permitted.

(See Dibrei Mordekhai, Waera, Halakha BaParasha)

Women's Corner - by Rabbanith Ruth Menashe 'a"h

Why Worry? G-d Takes Care of Every Single One of Us

The Midrash (Tanḥuma, Parashath Tazriya'), relates a story about a Kohen who lived in the Land of Israel and was an expert in curing cases of Šara'ath. He was going through hard times financially, and decided to leave the Land of Israel and find his livelihood abroad. Before his departure, he explained to his wife, that since people are accustomed to coming to him for help, he would teach her the "secrets of the trade".

He revealed to her, that every single hair in the human body, has its own fountain, from which it extracts its nourishment. No two hairs share the same fountain. When the individual fountain dries up, the hair dries up as well, which is a sign that the person was punished with Šara'ath.

(To be continued)

