

# A Torah Minute com™

By the Hakham  
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## Opening Cans on Shabbath

There are different opinions as to whether or not one may open a can on Shabbath. One concern of those who do not permit it is that it is considered to be creating a vessel. Most Posqim (deciders of Jewish law) agree, however, that opening a can does not constitute making a vessel.

Maran Mordekhai Eliyahu, zs"l, explains at length that it is permitted to open a can on Shabbath in order to use its contents on Shabbath, and mentions two reasons:

- 1) It is for one time use and will be discarded after it is empty, and
- 2) It was considered to be a vessel for its use from before it was opened.

If, therefore, someone reuses these cans, afterwards, even though this is not the way of the world, then he should not open a can on Shabbath, because he does not satisfy the two conditions.

(See Derekh HaTorah, Shabbath, 30:96,98.  
Iggeroth Moshe 1:122. Hazon Ish,  
OH 51:13. Shemirath Shabbath  
Kehilkhatha 9: note 10)

## Wayyera: Why Would They Worship the Dust on Their Feet?

יִקְחֵנָּה מֵעֵט־מַיִם וְרָחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיהֶם "Let some water be brought and wash your feet" (Bereshith 18:4). Rashi tells us that Abraham Abinu, 'a"h, was under the impression that the three angels were people who dwelt in the desert and bowed down (in worship) to the dust of their feet. The question is asked in Ben Yehoyada', that even with all the nonsensical customs that idolators have, how does bowing down to the dust on their feet make any sense in their eyes.

The answer is that the custom of these idolators was that, before embarking on a journey, they would go to their house of idol worship and offer an offering to their idol. This, they believed, would protect them along the way and that their idol would accompany them on the journey. They believed that their idols could hear them and would walk in front of them on the way.

In view of that, they imagined that the dust of the earth on which they were walking, their idol had trod on before them, and thus created some kind of holiness in their mind. That is why, when they reached their destination, they would bow down to this dust.

This explains why Abraham Abinu, 'a"h, made a point of telling them to wash their feet, to remove any trace of 'Abodah Zara (Idolatry), that he thought they may have.

(See Ben Yehoyada', Baba Meṣiah, 87b)



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## Paying a Workman in Advance for a Discount

Are you permitted to pay a Jewish workman in advance so that he will give you a lower price than the one he would ordinarily have charged?

Paying someone before he starts a job is actually considered to be a loan. The reason for that being that if the workman should decide not to do the work for the one who hired him, then he would owe that money to him, and thus it would be considered a loan. And since it is a loan for which he is getting benefit (a lower price), it is a form of interest and is forbidden.

This only applies in a case where he hasn't yet started the work. However, if the workman would start working on the job at the time he was paid, then it is permitted, because it becomes obvious that the money paid is for the work in hand and not a loan.

(See Ben Ish Hai, 2nd year, Parashath Wa-eth-hannan, Oth Yod Geemal)

## Etiquette & Cleanliness When Eating

One must be particular not to get one's clothes dirty when eating. It is preferable to eat with a spoon (or fork) rather than with one's fingers. But in a case when a person eats with his fingers, he must take care to only dirty the tips of the fingers and not his whole hand.

We must not put large amounts of food into our mouths. If the person who is eating has a beard, he must be careful not to spill food on his beard and dirty it. If his mustache is long, he must push it aside so that it will not get very dirty.

Obviously, these rules apply when a person is eating with others, but they also apply when one is eating at home at one's own table.

(See Ben Ish Hai, Parashath Behar Sinai/Behuqqothai, Oth Heh)



## Women's Corner - by Rabbanith Ruth Menashe 'a"n

### Giving People a Chance, Part 2 - (Continued from last week)

[Hakham Yosef Hayyim, 'a"n relates the story of two new brides who arrived at a party, one from a wealthy family and the other from one that was of modest means. The guests at the party looked at what the two were wearing and made assumptions that the bride who came from a wealthy family was wearing expensive and exquisite clothes and jewelry, while the other bride's clothing and jewelry were cheap and fake - when in fact exactly the opposite was true.]

Clearly, wealth does bring honor, and we should respect those who have been blessed with money because Haqqadosh Barukh Hu (the Holy One Blessed Be He) is the one who decided to honor them with it.

We all fall into the trap, on occasion, however, of judging others based on their socio-economic status or their external appearance. Similarly, we often judge the religiosity of people by their external appearance. While doing so, in many cases, gives us a good indication of where the person is holding, sometimes it fails us. Appreciating the inside of a person is a slow process that requires patience and time, but it gives us a more accurate understanding of who the person is. We live in a society where results have to be immediate and we get answers at the click of a button.

We owe it to others to allow them the time to be able to penetrate their inner selves, whether when interviewing them for a job, or as part of the Shidduch (dating) process or for any reason. We must always remember that, as Jews, we were all created with a holy Neshama (soul) which was breathed into us directly from the Holy One Blessed be He.