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AMIRA L'NOCHRI SHIUR

On Wednesday night Kollel hosted a shiur for ladies on the topic of Amira L'nochri, instructing non-Jews to do activities on our behalf on Shabbos.

Questions were flying as Rabbi Johnson outlined the halachos and the exceptions with real-life scenarios.

All ladies are invited to join us for part two this Wednesday evening at 23 Denman Ave at 8:00pm



In this Edition

The Secret to Success in Business **P.1**

Halachos of Tearing on Shabbos **P.2**

The Secret of a Jew's Success in Business

What is the secret of Jewish people's success in business?

מי זאת, עלה מן-המדבר, כְּתִימְרוֹת, עֶשְׂן: מְקַטְרֵת מֵר וְלִבְנָה, מְכַל אֲבָקֹת רוּכָל.

Who is it that arises from the desert like pillar of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant? (Shir Hashirim 3:6)

The Midrash teaches that this verse alludes to the three Avos. Just like myrrh is the head (choicest) of all spices, Avraham is the head (first) of all Tzaddikim. The frankincense which was brought along with the Korbanos refers to Yitzchak, who was offered with frankincense at the Akeidah. אֲבָקֹת רוּכָל, the powders of the merchant refers to Yaakov.

The connection to Yaakov and powder is found in this week's Parsha. Yaakov is accosted by the Angel of Eisav who wrestles with him until morning. The word used for wrestling is ויאבק, which Rashi connects to the word אבק meaning dust. In their scuffle, they kicked up the dust all the way to Hashem's throne.

The Midrash continues; All merchandising and business which the Jewish people do and are successful in, is in the merit of that dust of Yaakov.

What is the significance of dust being kicked up the Throne of Glory and how is this related to business?

The Zohar distinguishes between אבק (dust) and עפר (earth). Earth possesses a Divine quality that it is able to grow vegetation. Dust on the other hand does not produce.

Earth represents Kedusha which has the ability to generate G-dly revelation. Dust on the other hand represents the forces of impurity and negativity which are like decay and cannot produce holiness.

When the angels came to visit Avraham, appearing as Arab travellers, Avraham asks them to wash the dust off of the feet before entering his tent. They would worship this dust. Avraham saw no redemption or elevation for this dust and asked that it be removed.

But in wrestling the Angel, Yaakov succeeded in elevating this dust up to the Throne of Glory. This is metaphorical for the ability to transform the unholy into holy and elevate even that which is impure.

Tzaddikim do not have the ability to transform negativity, impurity and sin. It is the Baal Teshuvah, with their greater strength and desire, who are capable of elevating and transforming their past into the service of Hashem. Hence our sages teach in the place where Baalei Teshuvah standard, even perfect Tzaddikim cannot stand.

Who is that who arises from the desert?

The desert represents a place of spiritual bareness and desolation. Through Yaakov, even the powders (dust) of the desert can arise and be elevated.

The businessmen invests in order to profit. When a Jew engages in business there is a spiritual profit and objective at play. Entering the spiritually barren business environment

is for *Avodas Habirurim*, to elevate the sparks of G-dliness from within the mundane by utilising the world for the service of Hashem. This is the spiritual profit which we procure.

But engagement in the world is like wrestling the Angel of Eisav. There is the always present danger of succumbing, and instead of elevating the dust, we can become dragged down and dirtied by the dust itself.

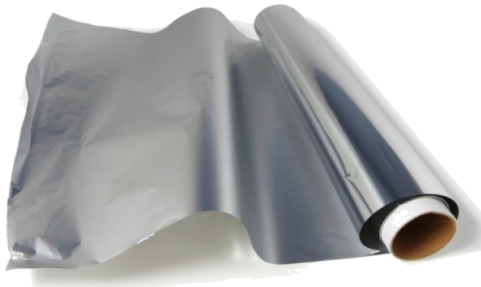
Yaakov's wrestle with the Angel was the prototype of the struggle and ultimate triumph of the Jewish business man in the field of Eisav. The Midrash teaches that our strength to prevail in our business comes from Yaakov who paved the way for us.

Through the refinement and elevation of the holiness trapped within the forces of impurity, the אבק becomes an אבוקה, a torch of great G-dly light.

When our business dealings are infused with this spiritual purpose, the merit of Yaakov will ensure that we are successful not only in the spiritual bottom line, but in the material sense too.

Tearing Toilet Paper, Foil and Tablecloths on Shabbos

Rabbi Yonason Johnson



The Shulchan Aruch¹ rules that on Shabbos one may not break earthenware or tear paper because this is like *מתקן כלי* - making a (useable) item on Shabbos. This refers to a situation where the act of tearing makes the paper into a useable item e.g. silver foil or toilet paper. Making a vessel is a derivative of the Melocha of *מכה בפטיש*.

The Mishna Berura² notes that this Halocha is referring to a situation where one is not tearing (or cutting) to a specific size. If one were to tear something to a specific size, one would also violate the Melocha of *מחתך*.

What About *קורע* - Tearing?

If one tears the paper for a useable purpose, the Mishna Berura writes that one also transgresses the Biblical Melocha of *קורע* - tearing. If the tearing does not serve a constructive purpose, it is would only be Rabbini- cally forbidden.

The Mishna Berura³ and Pri Megadim there- fore question why the Shulchan Aruch makes no mention of the prohibition of tearing in this Halocha?

The Alter Rebbe⁴ explains that the Shulchan Aruch's omission is because tearing paper does not constitute *קורע* at all! The Melocha of *קורע* only applies when separating multiple things (*גופים רבים*) that were attached or stuck together. A single piece of paper is one solid object (*גוף אחד*) and therefore tearing it would not be *קורע*. Since fabric is woven from multiple threads, tearing material would be *קורע*.

The Alter Rebbe brings proof for this position from a *Tosefta*⁵, which says that on Shabbos one may tear an opening in the leather covering over a barrel. We see that there is no concern of *קורע*, because leather, like paper is also a *גוף אחד*.

The Alter Rebbe's position is also held by the Tehillah Ledovid⁶, Ketzos Hashulchan and Pischa Zuta. It is also suggested in the Nish- mas Adam⁷. It is also implied in the Shulchan

Aruch⁸ in the very next halocha that separating papers which are stuck together (for a construc- tive purpose) is a Toldah of *קורע*.

The Mishna Berura⁹ challenges the Alter Rebbe's position based on a Yerushalmi. However Ketzos Hashulchan¹⁰ rigorously defends the Alter Reb- be's definition of *קורע*.

Making a Useable Item

Whereas the Poskim debate the issue of *קורע*, there is consensus on the Shulchan Aruch's rul- ing that when the tearing of the paper creates a useable item, this is forbidden as *מתקן כלי*.

According to the Mishna Berura the prohibition here is only Rabbinic. Whilst creating an actual vessel is Biblically forbidden, here no actual ves- sel *כלי* has been created, but only something that can be used *כלי*. There is no difference whether it is cut by hand or with an implement (e.g. scissors or knife).

However the Alter Rebbe rules that as long as a useable item is being created, there is a Biblical prohibition of *מתקן כלי*. The Biblical prohibition applies only if the paper is cut with an imple- ment. Tearing by hand is Rabbini- cally forbidden.

Practical Examples

Silver Foil and Cling Wrap: Tearing silver foil or cling wrap from the roll makes the foil/wrap into a useable item. Therefore this would be *מתקן כלי*. If one were to cut it with a knife or using the serrated edge of the box this would be Bibli- cally forbidden according to the Alter Rebbe. (According to the Mishna Berura there will also be the prohibition of *קורע*). The same would apply to tearing paper towel off the roll.

Tearing Toilet Paper: The above would also apply to tearing toilet paper since the tearing makes it into a useable item.

If toilet paper was not pre-torn before Shabbos, one may tear the toilet paper with a *shinui* e.g. with one's elbows¹¹. This relies on the principle that *כבוד הבריות*, human dignity, overrides Rabbinic prohibitions¹².

There are Poskim who write that one should not tear on the perforated lines of the toilet paper since this would be considered *מחתך*, cutting to a specific size. Others, including Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, rule that this does not consti- tute *מחתך* since tearing on the line is not done for the measure but for convenience. Tearing on the lines may also be treated like cutting with an

implement (since this is the usual manner) and therefore Biblically forbidden *מתקן כלי* according to the Alter Rebbe.

Cutting plastic tablecloths: Cutting plastic tablecloths from the roll is also forbidden on Shabbos because of *מתקן כלי* (and according to the Mishna Berura it is also *קורע*). Cutting to a specifically required measurement would also be *מחתך*.

Asking a non-Jew to cut these tablecloths would be forbidden under the laws of *אמירה לנכרי*. According to the view of the Alter Rebbe that tearing by hand is only Rabbini- cally forbidden, some Poskim¹³ sug- gest that one may ask a non-Jew to tear the tablecloths by hand. This relies on the prin- ciple of *מצוה במקום מצוה*, since there is a halachic requirement or at least a minhag for tables to be covered on Shab- bos. One should not rely on this *lechatchila*.

Tearing paper/napkins etc.: When tearing is not for the purpose of creating a useable item, according to the Alter Rebbe this is completely permissible as *קורע* does not apply in a *גוף אחד*. According to the Mishna Berura there is still Rabbini- cally forbidden *קורע*.

Opening chip bags: The sides of the bag have been sealed together. Separating them may constitute *קורע* according to the Alter Rebbe. Some Poskim are lenient when the bags are heat sealed since there is no glue.

Cereal boxes: Unsticking the tabs on the top of the cereal box would constitute *קורע* according to the Alter Rebbe. The box should rather be cut open (along the side so as not to make the box into a useable con- tainer). ■

¹ OC 340:13

² 340:41

³ 340 Biur Halocha אין שוברין

⁴ OC 340:17 in brackets. See also 314:16

⁵ Shabbos 17:9

⁶ 340:11 who explains that this is also the view of the Chacham Tzvi Teshuvos 39. See also Tehillah Ledovid 314:13

⁷ Shabbos 29:5. The Mishna Berura writes that the Nish- mas Adam retracted from this view.

⁸ 340:14

⁹ Biur Halocha ibid

¹⁰ 145:4

¹¹ According to the Alter Rebbe a *shinui* may not be re- quired as tearing by hand is only Rabbini- cally forbidden. Nonetheless a *shinui* is still advisable.

¹² See OC 312

¹³ Nishmas Hashabbos